

RAZZORCAKE

#107

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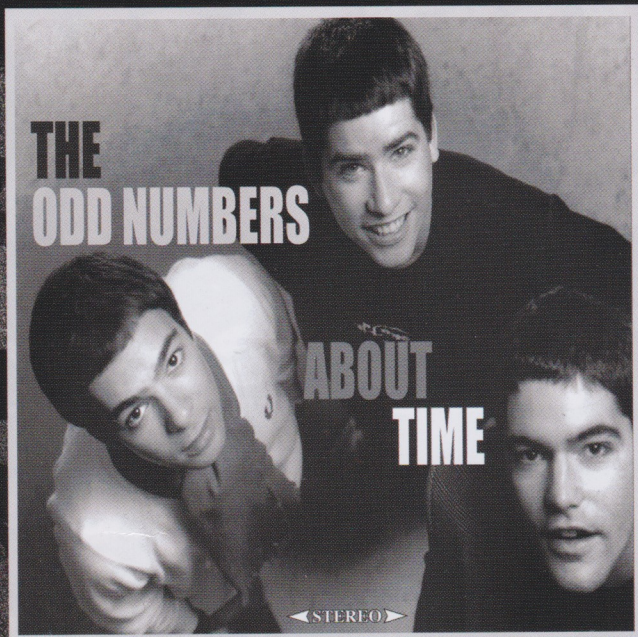
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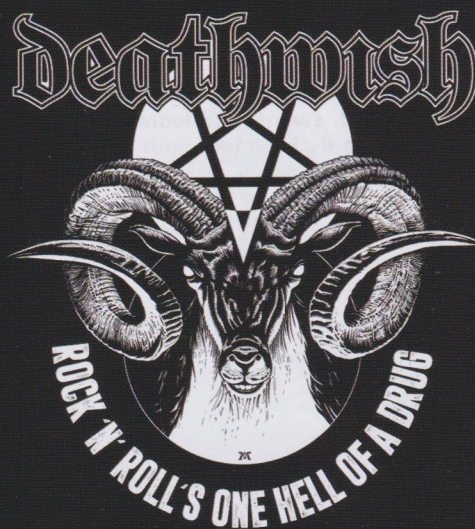
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Razorcake



Chocolate Syrup in a Condom

"Don't show your butthole."

It's a rock-solid request for a public performance and it made me laugh as I read that line in the Club sCUM interview. The memory it triggered caught me by surprise. I thought of my Grandma Kelly. How did a pragmatic sentence from a queer POC club organizer—a phrase that would have never come out of my grandmother's mouth—remind me of her?

The short answer is her generous spirit and sense of humor.

The longer answer is I still miss my grandma. She's the reason I moved to California in 1996, under the pretense of taking care of her. Really, we just hung out. She was a kind, resilient, smarter-than-she-let-on lady. She'd been a secretary at Port Hueneme, the naval base near Camarillo, and outlived my grandpa after being married for over fifty years. If all Christians actually lived like my grandma, I wouldn't have any problem with them. She treated people how she wanted to be treated and softened my stance on people who follow organized religion. Religion gave this cool lady a community and something to look forward to weekly. It gave her peace. She didn't shove it down my throat. She didn't talk down to me or dismiss what I was interested in. How could I begrudge that?

My dad was a superintendent of children's homes in Australia. My brother and I grew up with kids of all kinds of ethnicities, orientations, and abilities. My parents took the time to explain differences and the value of acceptance. Racism didn't make day-to-day sense. Why would I hate my friend over something as arbitrary and insignificant as skin color?

It doesn't matter to me if a person is X, Y, or Z. It's so obvious to me it almost feels dumb writing it out: love, kindness, and genuine

respect are not the sole domain of any one ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. However, I agree with what feminist theorist bell hooks has been saying for decades: "America is an imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." It's increasingly each day, while more and more pretending it's not.

Around when Obama got elected, I made the still-destabilizing mistake thinking America as a nation was progressing (ever so slowly, but progressing). We're actually in a dangerous vacuum that's become more obvious since Trump's election, where bald-faced greed and bigotry, on a national level, has eclipsed humanity. America's getting banged hard by the blunt force of fear and misinformation. Ignorant, harmful mouths have been unmuzzled and weaponized.

Binary works okay with computer code, not human beings. Gender is an act of social construction, not a legislative, religious, or biological imperative. Families are by both blood and bond. I want the freedom to pursue my pleasures (as long as they don't harm anyone else) and solace without persecution. Everyone deserves that space, whether it's quietly praying in a place of worship or performing in a sweat-soaked club with inventive squirting of chocolate syrup. So, while keeping eyes on the end goals—ending patriarchy, ending imperialism—an immediate step is obtainable. Solidarity across differences is not an obligation but an invitation to live a richer life, and is a matter of survival against bigotry in all its forms. It's true we have different paths, but the future is multiple and worth fighting for together. I do know this: if we can't even visualize the future we want for ourselves, we're doomed. I hope you find something meaningful and energizing in this issue. I did. Another world is possible.

—Todd Taylor

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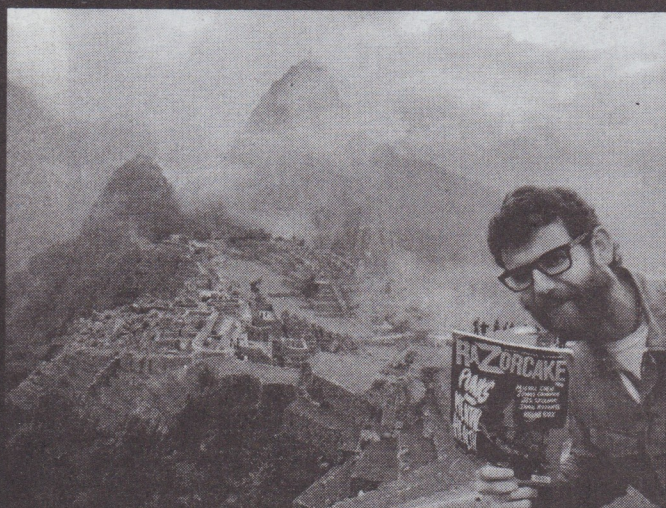
**I will not have my
life narrowed down.
I will not bow down
to somebody else's
whim or to someone
else's ignorance.**

—bell hooks, interviewing
Maya Angelou

THANK YOU: Ring, ring. "I have a nail in my face, some major skin problems, and my phone's a banana" thanks to Keith Rosson for the cover and Anthony Mehlhaff for the Despise You photo; I do believe in life after love. I'm strong enough thanks to Bone Dust for Donna's Cher illo.; "I won't forget my part, I won't forget my part" thanks to Bill Pinkel for Jim's illo.; Fuck Father Stein and the Catholic church for refusing to put him on the sex offender registry thanks to Shane Milner for Nerb's illo.; Fuck trends thanks to Laura Collins for the Joan Jett illo. in Dale's column; RIP Jesse James Romero. Props to RoQue Torres for the Puro Pinche Poetry illo.; Foghat = Farthat thanks to Codey Richards for the Chicken's illo.; It's just seeing people as human beings. That's the first step thanks to Rosie Gonce and Lauren Denitzio for the West Oakland Punks With Lunch interview, photos, and layout; Jimmy Alvarado, a treasure trove of firsthand ELA punk knowledge has been in bands since the '80s and this is the third or fourth time he's ever been interviewed by a fanzine (I'm guilty as anyone) thanks to Rebecca Minjarez, Old HC Dude, and Jesse Zoroxed for the La Tuva photos and layout; No one asks people in West Hollywood to do their parties somewhere else. Latinx on the border of East LA/Montebello bringing the party home thanks to Ever Velasquez, Rudy Bleu, Amina Cruz, Marin, Chino Rodriguez, Gerardo David Torres Salas, Martin Sorrondeguy, and Eric Baskauskas for the Club sCUM interview, photos, artwork, and layout; Even after the interview, they still seem more mythical than real, like a powerviolence unicorn in a Dodgers jersey thanks to Juan Espinosa, Donofthedeat, Anthony Mehlhaff, and Albert Licano for the Despise You interview and photos; I think anyone who's not an asshole can stand behind the sentiment of a style of music "creating a place for groups oppressed by bigotry to feel at home." Thanks to Billups Allen and Danny Martin for the One Punk's Guide to Patrick Cowley article and illustrations.

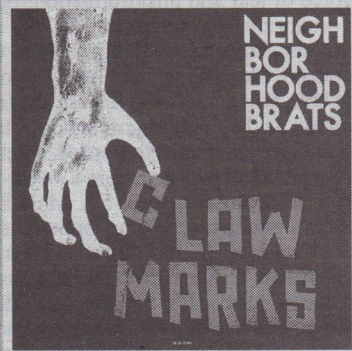
"If they'd had been around about two millennia ago, Drowning World would have made the perfect soundtrack for Jesus's crucifixion. Fucking brutal, brother." —Simone Carter, Conduit, Drowning World LP. Thanks to 107's rotation of music, zine, and book reviewers: Camille Reynolds, Kayla Greet, Sean Arenas, Candace Hansen, Matt Werts, Simone Carter, Kurt Morris, Jimmy Alvarado, Sean Koepenick, Juan Espinosa, Tim Brooks, Ty Stranglehold, Chris Terry, Keith Rosson, Rich Cocksedge, Garrett Barnwell, Mark Twistworthy, Paul J. Comeau, Art Ettinger, Chad Williams, Ryan Nichols, Ian Wise, Sal Lucci, Mike Frame, Matt Average, Michael T. Fournier, The Lord Kveldulfr, Steve Adamyk, Billups Allen, Nerb, Bryan Static, Adrian Salas, Jim Woster, Craven Rock, Jimmy Cooper, Tricia Ramos, and Iggy Nicklbottum.

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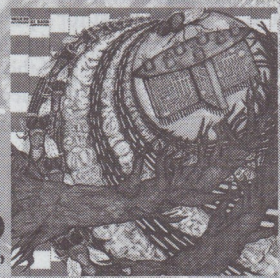
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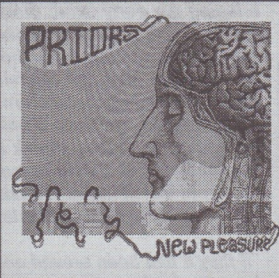
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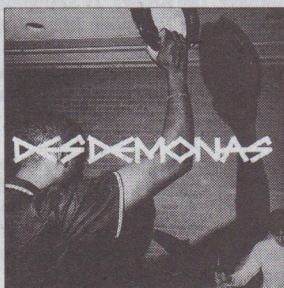
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DES DEMONAS
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THE CAVEMEN

THE CAVEMEN
LOWLIFE EP



GINO & GOONS

GINO AND THE GOONS
SHE WAS CRUSHED EP

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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, *Razorcake* wouldn't be what it is. Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Kari Hamanaka, Rishbha Bhagi, Ever Velasquez, Nicole Macias, Donna Ramone, Marcos Siref, Derek "established a stab list" Whipple, Dayna Castillo, Matthew Hart, Chris Baxter, Kayla Greet, Jimmy Alvarado, Yvonne Drazan, Dale Drazan, Josh Rosa, Jennifer Federico, Ethan Shapiro, Samantha McBride, Skinny Dan, Robert El Diablo, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Jason Willis, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Juan Espinosa, Meztlí Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Kevin Dunn, Jennifer Whiteford, Steve Thueson, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, CJ Miller, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, John Miskelly, Andy Garcia, Camille Reynolds, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Chris Devlin, Emma Johnson, Tim Brooks, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Chris Terry, Jackie Rusted, Art Fuentes, Dylan Davis, Becky Minjarez, Keith Rosson, Paul Silver, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Ensminger, Danny Rust, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Noemi, Eden Kittiver, Jesse Zeroxed, Garrett Barnwell, Nørb, Chris Mason, Tim Jamison, Codey Richards, Kiyoshi Nakazawa, Shane Milner, James Rosario, Martin Wong, Rosie Gonce, Elly Dallas, Karr Antunes, Ivan Ehlers, Ollie Mikse, Eskander Fairweather, Mikie Manzer, Benny Hope, Sam Grinberg, J. Frontirre, Scotty McMaster, Jen Dot, Rick V., Phil Gerigscott, Jeremy Jones, Taleen Kali, Dino Everett, Shelby Hohl, Daniel J. Torres, Lorien Lamarr, Will Kenneth, Will Malkus, Joe Arpke, Alexis Ratkevich, RoQue Torres, Johnny Wells, Billups Allen, Jordan Kamin, Nick Riggs, and Abdul Vas.

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NEVER LET ME FORGET

DONNA RAMONE

**Fuck you,
she can do
whatever
she wants.**

Cher

Cher is one of the most important influences in my life. Yeah, that Cher. Sonny & Cher, "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves," *Mermaids, Moonstruck*, and *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*—Cher. Grammy winner, Oscar winner, Emmy winner, Golden Globe winner, and Razzie winner. Holder of two Guinness World Records: Oldest Female Artist to Top the Billboard Hot 100 Charts for "Believe" in 2002, and Highest Grossing Tour by a Female Artist of All Time in 2007 (a record that was broken by Celine Dion and then Madonna a few years later, but I don't even begin to give a shit). She is idyllic. She is iconic. She is immortal. She is a fully formed goddess in a single, four-letter word—fuckin' Cher.

In 1946, Cherylyn Sarkisian was born in Southern California. At eighteen, she was a backup singer on The Ronettes' "Be My Baby" and the Righteous Brothers' "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling." In 1965, Cher released a folk-pop record that was top-twenty on the Billboard charts. Later that year, she and Sonny Bono released "I Got You Babe" and became Sonny & Cher. *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour* premiered in 1971.

accepted it as fact. I had too much dark hair, darker skin, a big nose, too tall for a girl (note: I know I'm short now, but I was this height by the time I was ten). I had low self-esteem before I even understood what esteem was. But in 1991, I was allowed to stay up later with my parents and watch TV. The *Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour* was still in syndication.

Beamed into my living room, there she was. She had too much dark hair, darker skin, a big nose, and was too tall for a girl. And she was smart, funny, talented, and didn't give a shit what anyone thought of her, including the husband standing in the same frame. And goddamn was she beautiful. She was so beautiful, and she flaunted it all over that sound stage. A woman so gorgeous, she could be on TV! I was lost at sea, and Cher was the lighthouse; a beacon of hope I could now steer towards.

Though I do not have the singing, dancing, or acting talents of Cher (because no one does and no one ever will), I still felt more confident in myself because she existed. This is what people mean when they say, "representation is important." In the absence of arguments to the contrary, I would

Cher is quoted as once saying, "I'm insecure about everything, because... I'm never going to look in the mirror and see this blond, blue-eyed girl. That is my idea of what I'd like to look like." Like I said, that bullshit gets in deep and even a bastion of hope like Cher isn't immune. We are all struggling to accept ourselves, in a world that clearly doesn't accept us. It's tough.

Cher is a phoenix. She put out a folk album, then a disco album, then a rock album, then a pop album, and now she's putting out an ABBA covers album. She played a lesbian in *Silkwood*, a drug-addicted single mom in *Mask*, and a doctor at an abortion clinic who is murdered by an anti-choice protestor in *If These Walls Could Talk*. She flaunted the flower tattoos on her butt in the music video for "If I Could Turn Back Time," which became the first music video banned by MTV. She's always been a strong, outspoken feminist, even back when it earned her nothing but backlash. She is a loud advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. She shit-talks the GOP better than any asshole on MSNBC. She bought hundreds of gallons of clean water for Flint,

She taught me that I, too, am beautiful. We all are. And just like flower tattoos on a butt, it's permanent, it's part of who I am.

I was born in 1983 in Southern California. I have a memory from kindergarten. One of the pretty blonde girls who always wore dresses to school talked to me. She was crying, hiding in a sideways metal barrel, that, for some reason, was considered playground equipment. I climbed into the barrel with her, asking if she was okay. She told me she had been "dumped." I didn't say anything. She told me I didn't know what the word "dumped" meant, and she was right. She explained her boyfriend didn't want to be her friend anymore. She told me I never had a boyfriend and I didn't know how she felt, and she was right. And then she told me the reason why I had not experienced a kindergarten love affair was because I was ugly. She had been correct up until that point—so maybe, she was right. I am ugly.

By 1991, I didn't even question it. Other kids called me ugly often enough that I had

lean on syllogistic reasoning. Kids at school called me ugly. No one looks like me in movies, television, or magazine covers. Only beautiful people are positively portrayed in media. Therefore, am I ugly, and anyone who looks like me is also ugly.

I internalized that bullshit, and further perpetuated the idea that people who look like me are ugly by changing my appearance to fit beauty standards that were never made with me in mind. Some of that bullshit is in deep—even though Cher's perm throughout the 1980s was a cascade of curls that deserves a Nobel Prize for the cultural advancement of hair follicles, I didn't stop straightening my hair until six months ago.

Though I don't miss the burning smell, I do sometimes want to go back to straightening my hair because I still don't like the way curls look. Not just my curls, but all curls. I want to unlearn that so bad, and yet it's stuck. Even

Michigan. She has served as the National Chairperson and Honorary Spokesperson for the Children's Craniofacial Association since 1990 (because of how moved she was after acting in *Mask*, I shit you not). She built a school that provides food, medicine, and education to orphans in Kenya. She marches in protests alongside us. She's a mystic force, standing up for what is good and right. Her Twitter is fire.

On her Farewell Tour (which technically wasn't her last tour, but fuck you, she can do whatever she wants), I went to the final show in April 2005 at the Hollywood Bowl. I had never seen Cher before, and I was a bit nervous. As a young punk twentysomething, I wasn't initially sure how seeing Cher in such a giant stadium would feel. How could anything ever really live up to the emotional attachment I have to my idea of her? What if she does or says something super shitty, like



BONE DUST

so many punks I once looked up to have done at shows? What if her singing is terrible—or she only does tracks from her disco years? What if I stop feeling the courage I gained from her because of something that happens at this show?

I can't believe that even for a moment I doubted Cher. The Village People opened, but who cares. She played over twenty songs, showed multiple video montages of her career and life, and there were at least a dozen costume changes (and every one was designed by Bob fucking Mackie). I swear to god I almost died. She would pause, sometimes mid-song, and speak right to the crowd, right to me, and say simple things like, "You're beautiful, I love you." After she finished her last speech, fireworks went off and in actual flaming letters above the stage it read, "FOLLOW THIS YOU BITCHES."

It's one of the only ticket stubs I still have stashed among my tchotchkes.

When things get weird, late at night after the alcohol or fatigue has made us brazen, people will inevitably tell me all the thoughts they think of me (and I absolutely do the same to them). They call me "confident." They'll say I'm "cool." And on occasion, someone will tell me I'm beautiful. I want to completely believe all of those things myself, but I don't. I second-guess everything I do, big or small. I always feel like I have no idea what I'm doing. I don't actually know what a cool person consists of, but I thought it involved brand-name clothes and apathy—and I definitely have zero percent of both of those. But beautiful? Fuckin'-a right, you bet your sassy ass I'm beautiful.

Sure, not every eye-holder can see it, but I know I am. I work hard to be this beautiful,

too. It's not my face, or my hair, or ass—it's just this feeling; my bravery at choosing to believe in me, and label myself as beautiful. I'm beautiful, and that blonde five-year-old in 1988 was probably being fuckin' racist (and I promise you, kindergartners can be, and often are, very racist). Cher helped me believe (Get it? Like in 1998, when she released "Believe" and it sold eleven million fucking copies worldwide). She taught me that I, too, am beautiful. We all are. And that belief is something that's now unshakable within me. And just like flower tattoos on a butt, it's permanent, it's part of who I am, and everyone should be able to see it—offended onlookers be damned.

—Donna Ramone



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"Most underrated band at Riot Fest!"

How a Song Took Me Apart and Put Me Back Together

I wasn't able to deal with my cousin's suicide until after I got sober. Every time someone died, it would bring me back to the aftermath of Mark's death. It didn't even have to be someone I knew. The suicide of a celebrity would send me into a spiral that ended in intoxication. The only way I knew how to deal with these deaths—that is Mark's death—was to not feel anything at all.

There were times when we raised our fists to the world

Ready to crush opposition

And there were times when we lied like thieves in disguise

And I'm remembering those times too

In September I attended Riot Fest 2018 in Chicago, Ill. It was a work trip; I was there to spend time with a band I'm writing a book about. I like this band quite a bit and now that I've gotten to know its members and close-knit crew, I like them even more. Forgive me for being coy, but this story isn't about them.

In the days leading up to the festival, I hadn't paid much attention to who else would be on the bill because I didn't want to be disappointed that I wouldn't be able to find the time to see them. This trip wasn't about me, I reminded myself, but that's not how it worked out.

A van from the festival was dispatched to the hotel and whisked us away to the festival grounds in Douglas Park. One of the band members was in a side project with musicians who were also playing the festival, and they'd been given an early slot. That's why we were at the festival long before they were scheduled to play.

I watched the show and then went to the artists' catering tent for lunch. I luxuriated in the ease and convenience afforded to rock stars of the 21st century. I even did some work for the book.

In the middle of the afternoon people began to prepare in earnest for the show that evening. I found myself without anything to do. That's when I slipped away to see Dillinger Four.

*We never had a chance but we made our plans 'til they were blown apart
We watched it all crash around our feet and man it broke my heart*

*We took it day by day and never thought for once those days were gonna end
I got what I wanted when I think about it but I miss my friends*

Who is Dillinger Four? They are a four-piece (duh) punk-rock band from Minneapolis, Minn. They don't look particularly punk. They look more like bartenders. Guitarist Eric Funk ran Triple Rock Social Club with his wife Gretchen until last year when the revered venue closed.

Dillinger Four specializes in melodic, up-tempo punk with lots of time changes. Though the band has been around for over twenty years, they've only put out four albums, the last two with Far Wreck Chords. Their most recent album came out a decade ago and was called *Civil War*.

If you were a reader of this zine at the time, you might recall *Razorcake* published multiple reviews of the album—somewhere between twelve and twenty if memory serves. I wrote something weird and forgettable because I was coked out when I wrote it, which means I was probably drunk, too, because I almost never did blow without drinking. In those days I mostly used cocaine to "balance" out the enormous amounts of alcohol I was consuming.

To recap: I liked Dillinger Four just fine, but they weren't my favorite band. And then my life fell apart.

Accidents or accusations I got my fucking reasons

*And even hearts of gold can overload
When they've lost what they believed in
When the seams start to come apart
In this frustration we find our salvation*

In the beginning of 2009, my friend JJ took his own life. JJ was from the San Diego punk rock community. He welcomed me into his circle of friends when I moved there from L.A. and we partied together at shows and the occasional get together. I was having a rough time in San Diego and I was always happy to see JJ. And then, suddenly, he was dead. I've written a lot about him and speculated on why he may or may not have intentionally overdosed. I'm not going to revisit that now. It's enough for you to know that I was devastated.

To mourn his passing, I did two things: I put as much drugs and alcohol into my body as possible, and I listened to Dillinger Four's *Civil War*.

I've fallen flat on my face more than once in this race

It didn't stop me from trying

*I did my best at least but I get no peace
When I'm holding the shortest straw*

This mourning period was one of the strangest of my life. I did normal things like go to work, spend time with my family, read books. But there were also times when I was driving around town coked out of my mind and blackout drunk. I bought drugs from people I didn't know late at night. I got thrown out of bars, including a cowboy bar where I'd made a scene and insisted I wasn't a cop. Large chunks of time went missing.

None of this behavior diminished my pain one bit. If anything, it made it worse. The pain was exquisite, and listening to Dillinger Four's *Civil War* intensified those feelings. Any of the songs on the record could darken my mood, but the first track, "A Jingle for the Product" never failed to clobber me. Sometimes the opening notes made it hard to hold my shit together.

The irony of grief is that you intensely feel the loss of what's no longer there, but the feeling is so powerful you hold on to the loss instead. That's how it was for me and I didn't want to lose those feelings because it meant that as long as I felt it, JJ was still with me.

So I drank and did drugs and listened to Dillinger Four, usually while driving, the only time in my squalid little life when no one knew where I was. I'd tell myself that I was going straight home after work but then "A Jingle for the Product" would come on and I'd pull into the parking lot of a bar that just moments before I'd told myself I wasn't going to go to.

By telling you this I'm not trying to excuse my pathetic behavior, I just want you understand what I was in for when Dillinger Four took the stage at Riot Fest earlier this year.

Separate everyday a little more from the things we start

Well I won't forget my part, I won't forget my part



BILL PINKEL

I put as much drugs and alcohol into my body as possible, and I listened to Dillinger Four's *Civil War*.

I put my all access pass away and secured my wallet in my right front pocket and my glasses in my left. I waded through the crowd as Dillinger Four took the stage. The sun was beginning to sink, which made the setting somewhat bucolic; but for the band the sunlight stabbed into their eyes with cruel intensity, prompting Paddy, who plays bass and sings, to curse god for the cruel joke of the sun.

The crowd was a mix of young and old with most fans somewhere in their late twenties and early thirties. There were guys with sleeveless denim jackets and Mohawks and bandanas tied around their faces. There were young women with short skirts and big boots. Weed smoke drifted through the dusk but the smell of beer and sweat predominated. A few people were shitfaced,

some desperately so, but the mood was pleasant, joyful even. One guy raised a turkey leg into the air. Someone else shouted, "Most underrated band at Riot Fest!" I got the sense that for these people Dillinger Four was the only band on the bill that truly mattered.

As soon as D4 started to play a dozen cups went skyward and I was baptized with beer. I was grateful for this because it provided cover for the tears that came with an intensity that I hadn't been prepared for. Dillinger Four opened with "A Jingle for the Product," a song whose lyrics are loaded with loss, regret, and a solemn refusal to give in, a song that captured all of the emotions rocketing around my skull the winter I mourned JJ.

But it's also a song that set the stage for my life after alcohol when JJ's death catalyzed

my decision to get sober and stay that way. I think about JJ every day but sometimes he feels very far away. The song brought us together again, made me feel his loss anew, the difference was this time I wasn't scurrying to some dark place with a bottle in my hand and a bag in my pocket. This time I was surrounded by jubilant strangers who threw their arms around me and sang in my ear and lifted me up.

*In the end what you want is much different from what you choose
Yeah, it's bigger than me and you
It's bigger than me and, than me and you*

—Jim Ruland

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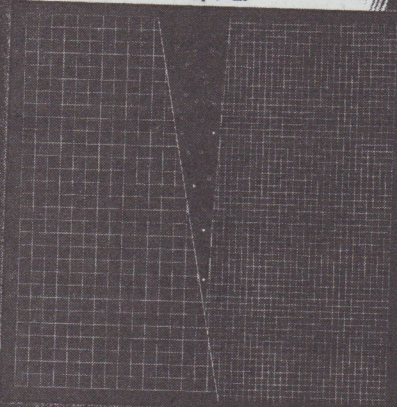


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BY OL' LUCKY NAKA

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GET DIARRHEA AT WORK TODAY?

THAT'D BE AWFUL.

YUP. I FOR SURE AM
GOING TO
GET
DIARRHEA
AT WORK
TODAY.

FREE BONUS COMIC

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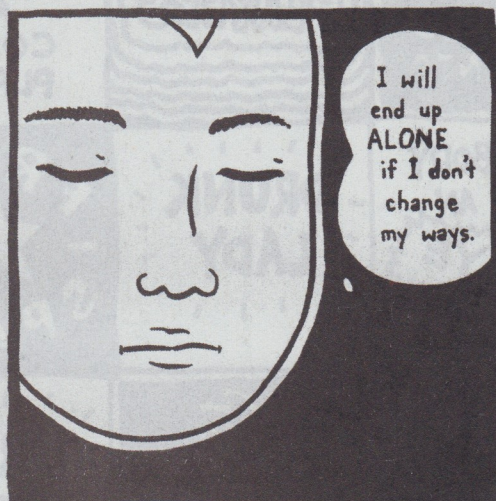
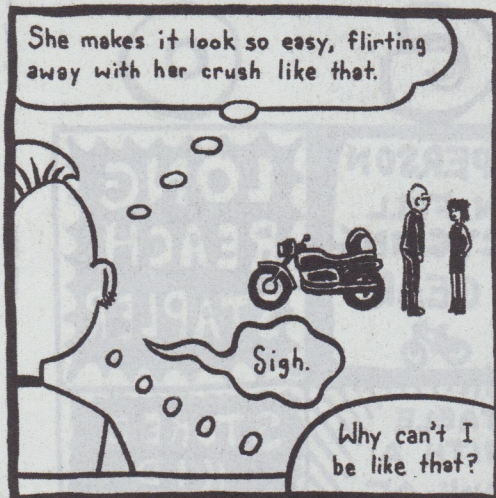
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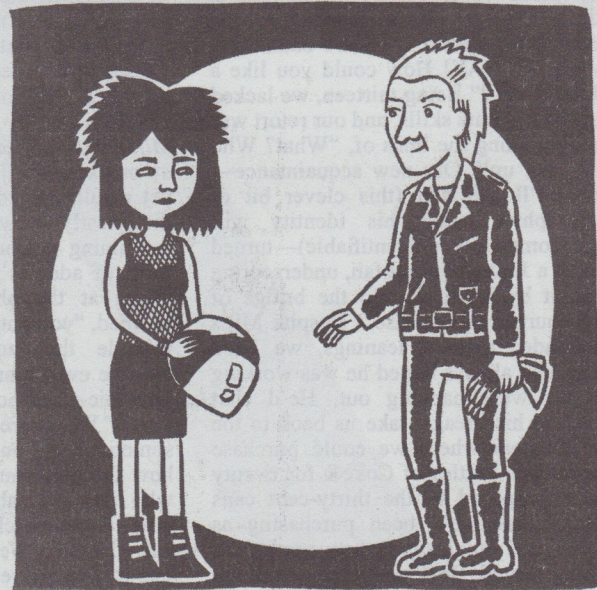
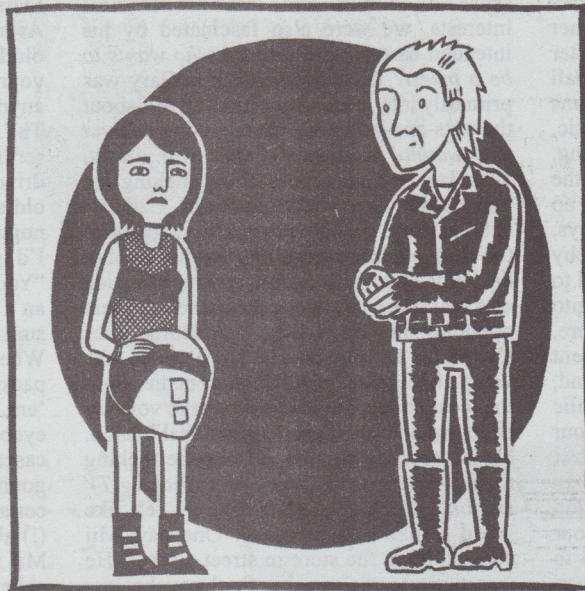
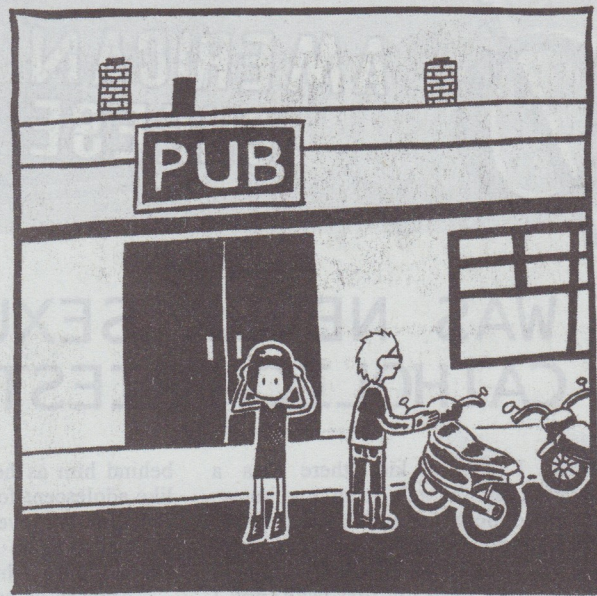
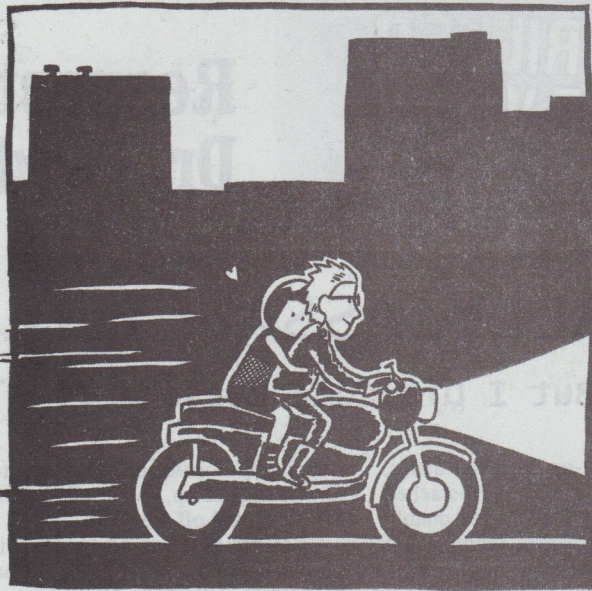


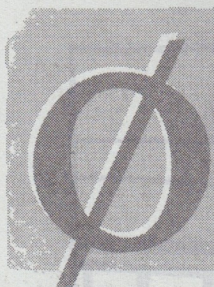
&

Chris

BY MARINAOMI







AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW

REV. NORB

Respect to Dr. Ford.

I WAS NEVER SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BY A CATHOLIC PRIEST (But I Did Come Reasonably Close)

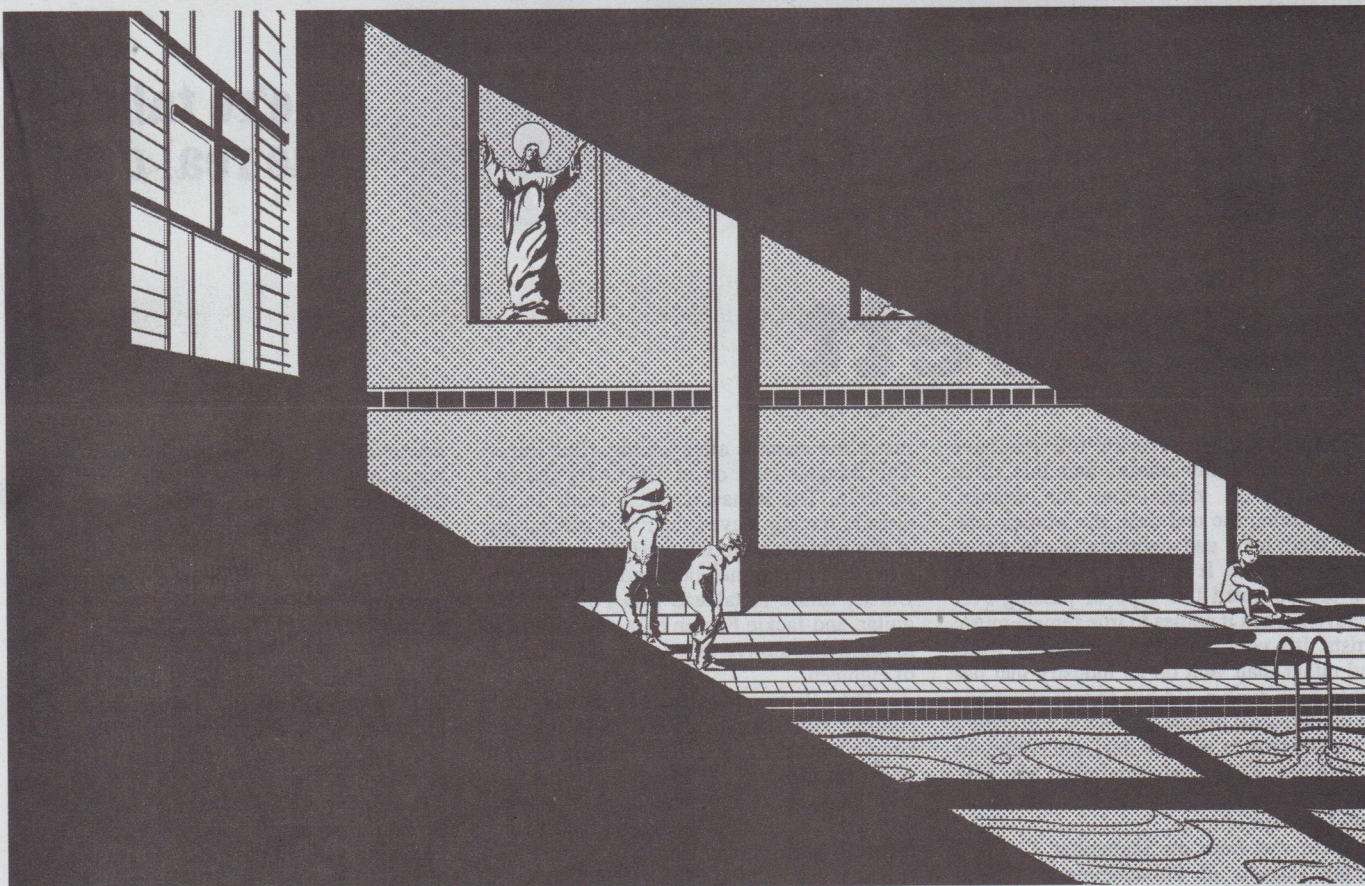
When I was a kid, there was a supermarket up the hill from my house. And, local options for action, excitement, and derring-do being in rather limited supply, my buddy Gary (with whom I would someday form my first band) and I spent a fair amount of our adolescent years walking up to the grocery store, for no other reason than we often had little else better to do. The supermarket included a small café, where we'd hang out and drink cans of Mr. Pibb®, talking about girls, music, and other pimply hyperbole. One evening, the guy who'd been dust-mopping the floor came over to our table and struck up a conversation. As thirteen-year-old boys, thus the demographic least appreciated by American shopkeepers, we were relieved to find that he wasn't there to chase us out into the parking lot. He asked how old we were, where we went to school, where we went to church. He taught Sunday school, and, as we were Catholic kids attending public school, it turned out he knew a lot of our classmates. He was a nice enough fellow, about five years older than we were—an adult, but not by much. The conversation drifted to music, and he asked us who our favorite band was. Punk rock having yet to have discovered us, our answer was Cheap Trick, whom we absolutely worshipped at the time. “Oh my god,” he laughed, rolling his eyes, “they are the GAYEST band ever! They are SO GAY! How could you like a band that GAY?” Being thirteen, we lacked world-class debate skills, and our retort was something along the lines of, “What? Who cares? Shut up!” Our new acquaintance—whom we'll call Mij (this clever bit of cryptography assures his identity will remain completely unidentifiable)—turned out to be a Jimmy Buffett fan, underscoring this point by breaking into the bridge of “Cheeseburger in Paradise.” Despite Mij's wrongheaded musical leanings, we liked the guy, and always hoped he was working when we were hanging out. He'd chat with us on his breaks, take us back to the employee area where we could purchase sixteen-ounce bottles of Coke® for twenty cents, as opposed to the thirty-cent cans of Mr. Pibb® we'd been purchasing as civilians, and taught us a dirty version of “Nothing Could Be Finer Than to Be in Carolina.” Sometimes we'd traipse around

behind him as he dust-mopped the aisles, like adolescent followers of a porn-stached Socrates. We loved Mij. He was reasonably unique amongst supermarket janitors: He was studying to be a priest.

Amused as we were at Mij's irreverent sense of humor and lame-ass musical interests, we were also fascinated by his intended career path. I mean, *who wants to be a priest? On purpose?* While Gary was primarily interested in questioning Mij about the nuts-and-bolts of priestly living—*Don't you wanna have sex? Don't you wanna have kids?*—I was more about picking his brain about the workings of the Catholic church itself. I gobbled up any nuggets of the church's inner workings that he cared to drop my way, the most interesting of which was that there are two rival Catholic orders operating in Green Bay: The Norbertines (!) and the Diosceans. The Norbertines take vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience to the local abbot. The Diosceans take vows of celibacy, and obedience to the local bishop, but *no* vows of poverty. They were fucking loaded. They owned *one of our fucking TV stations!* I appreciated the info. I felt like I had a man on the inside. One day, Mij showed up at the store in street clothes. He was there to pick up his final paycheck—he'd finished the first part of his training, and was now a member of the Norbertine order. We congratulated him, and asked how we were supposed to address him now that he was a holy-rollin' big shot. Were we to call him *Father Mij* now? *His holiness? Mij, prince of peace, lamb of god, savior of all mankind?* Mij explained that he was not yet a full-fledged priest—he was a *frater*, the priestly equivalent of being a manager-in-training at Domino's®. Ergo, the proper form of address was “Brother Mij.” “I'm living at the abbey now,” Brother Mij beamed, “you gotta check it out sometime!” Outside the supermarket, Brother Mij became even more animated: “We have an Olympic-sized pool! You guys gotta check it out!” We assured him we'd drop in on him sometime, although I didn't exactly know how the hell you'd “drop in” on someone who lives in an abbey. “What are you doing now? Come check it out!” We hemmed and hawed a little. Were we even supposed to be there? “I can have visitors,” claimed Brother Mij, somewhat unconvincingly. The idea of

stepping foot inside an abbey was too weird for me to pass up, so we piled into Brother Mij's car, and off we went.

Brother Mij was no longer driving the copper-colored Chevy Nova he had when he was merely Mij, Dust-Mopper to the Stars. We were now puttering down Webster Avenue in an immaculately maintained little old lady car from the early '60s. “Where's your car?” I inquired. “Don't need it anymore,” he replied. “This is a nun car! The nuns have the coolest cars! They're serviced like clockwork, and they never drive anywhere! Their cars are twenty years old and run like new!” I mentally filed this nugget away with the rest of the information I'd gleaned from hanging out with Mij. “You guys wanna go swimming? We have an Olympic-sized pool at the abbey!” Mij sure loved pimping his Olympic-sized pool. When we pointed out that we hadn't exactly packed swimsuits, Mij said we didn't need 'em. “We'll swim nude!” We cocked a mutual eyebrow, not-so-sure about that particular cascade of genius. “Hey, it's not like there's gonna be *girls* there!” retorted Mij. He had a certain point. We rolled up to the St. Norbert (!) abbey, parked the nun car, and followed Mij inside. Present company excepted, the abbey appeared quite deserted. Sunlight beamed through stained glass windows at the end of a long hallway, and eventually we wound up at the pool—Olympic-sized, as advertised. “You guys wanna swim?” We hemmed and hawed some more. Gary was in. I was out. My reticence was not so much over skinny-dipping with other guys (although I suppose that did strike me as a bit weird), but more about the oddness of hanging out naked somewhere I probably wasn't supposed to be in the first place. Like, if a carload of angry priests roll up with shotguns yelling “WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?”, I wanna be able to take off running at a moment's notice. That means socks, shoes, and clothes. Plus, what if a procession of solemn old priests in full vestments come walking by the pool, swinging incense burners and chanting in Latin and there I am spitting water and playing Marco Polo with my wang hanging out? What am I, a goddamn water nymph? *Pass.* After ensuring that I was sure I didn't want to go for a manly, skyclad dip in the Olympic-sized pool with him, Brother Mij



SHANE MILNER

Maybe I'm ashamed, maybe I figure I can deal with my problems on my own, maybe it's just easier to pretend it never happened.

let me root around in The Holy Refrigerator, where I helped myself to a Diet Pepsi and a blueberry yogurt. I dined at poolside, while Brother Mij and Gary splashed around in 660,253.09 gallons of holy water. Apart from Hairy Brother Mij putting me off my Dannon® by turning a series of truly unnecessary underwater somersaults, that was all there was to our skinny-dipping trip to the abbey. Everyone eventually got dressed, and Brother Mij took us home in the nun car. As Mij no longer worked at the supermarket, our paths crossed less frequently; soon we didn't see him at all. Not being a particularly church-going sort, I would occasionally wonder, as the years rolled on, whatever became of ol' Mij. And, one day, Mij—by then, *Father Mij*—turned up in the news. For molesting teenage boys. In the Olympic-sized pool. Of St. Norbert's abbey.

Yikes.

I was saddened and disappointed by the news, yet I cannot say I was shocked. Mij was always as nice as can be to us, but, over the years, it was hard not to wonder if he

had been working some kinda angle with the skinny-dipping escapade and all. Apparently so. Christ, we were probably the first boys he took to that pool! We were his test subjects! *Suburban Mutilation leads and the rest of you assholes follow in our footsteps!* It's also hard not to speculate on what I might have done had the incident gone beyond skinny-dipping and yogurt. If the incident was above a certain level of heinousness, I'd imagine (operative word: "Imagine") I would have reported it to my parents/the cops/etc. Below that heinousness threshold, perhaps I say nothing. There are lots of good reasons to say nothing. Maybe I don't want to deal with my dad: *What the hell were you thinking, going skinny-dipping with a man five years older than you??* Maybe I don't want to deal with the cops. Maybe I don't want to get Mij in trouble. Maybe I'm ashamed, maybe I figure I can deal with my problems on my own, maybe it's just easier to pretend it never happened. And, most importantly, maybe *none of your fucking business*, that's why. But now let's say it's years later, and I find out Mij is teaching at

a Catholic high school (which happened), or maybe he's running for pope, or maybe, I don't know... maybe he's nominated for a position on the Supreme Court. Maybe now I think, holy shit, I *cannot* let this guy get in a position of power, where he can fuck up more people's lives the way he fucked up mine. So, even though I'd rather deal with my problems on my own, even though I'd rather pretend it never happened, even though my life would be infinitely easier if I just continued to keep my mouth shut, maybe I bite the bullet, suck up my courage, and tell my story—even though I know half the world will be calling me a liar and an assassin out to ruin a wonderful man and "why didn't you say anything in 1981?" and all that other horseshit. *None of your fucking business, that's why.* Respect to Dr. Ford, and everyone else in that boat.

Disagree with me and I'll come over to your house and turn nude somersaults, and we'll see how *you* like it.

Love,
—Norb





**We're talking
the real deal.**

Joan Jett

There are those in rock'n'roll who have never gotten a fair shake, and this often rang—and still rings—true for women. We're talking the real deal; the women who held their own and continue to do so on their own terms. It isn't just rock'n'roll that has pigeon-holed this type of passing-over behavior when it comes to true female music artists. It's very much music industry-wide, and rather than vent on an industry that has yet to fully evolve, I'd like to talk about one of my favorite people in rock'n'roll. She's a woman who *is* the real deal and continues to hold her own on *her* own terms: Ms. Joan Marie Larkin, best known to the rest of the world as Joan Jett.

Joan was born on September 22, 1958 in the suburbs of Philadelphia and lived around the DC/Baltimore area. Her family later settled down in West Covina, Calif. in 1970, a city in the greater L.A. County area planted in the San Gabriel Valley. Within a year, she got bit by the rock bug and like any self-respecting rock'n'roller, hit her parents up for an electric guitar. That Christmas she got her first six stringer at the age of thirteen. Wanting to learn and get things happening, Joan took guitar lessons, but the kook tried to teach her folk songs on an acoustic guitar, which was the polar opposite of where Joan had her sights set. (I've often wondered what that guitar teacher thought years down the road.) Joan soon shitcanned guitar lessons and began playing along to records, something I think anyone who's just starting out on their instrument can relate to.

While getting her chops honed the next few years, an under-aged Joan regularly hung out at Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco, a who's-who Hollywood club which heavily catered to the glam craze that was rearing its beautifully glittered head at the time. Like-minded people who shared a love for this genre of rock'n'roll hung out at Rodney's club. Joan met Sandy West in the summer of 1975. Sandy was a powerhouse drummer who wanted to start up an all-female band.

Their initial getting together to jam involved Joan taking more than a few buses from West Covina to Sandy's house in Long Beach. It was a good thirty-plus miles away, but the steadfast pair made it happen and they clicked immediately. The rest of their band rounded up after getting bassist Micki Steele onboard—and who left Joan and Sandy

just a few months after joining. (She joined The Bangles later on in 1983.) By the end of 1975, The Runaways were ready to go, already having played their first official gig at the Whisky a Go Go in Hollywood. This five piece lineup included lead singer Cherie Currie, future metalhead Lita Ford on lead guitar, and Jackie Fox on bass. Oh, and keep in mind that all five girls were under the age of eighteen.

The Runaways secured a recording contract with Mercury Records in the first couple months of 1976. The Runaways went on to record four full lengths; the first two with the original five-piece lineup (although Fox didn't actually play bass on their debut, it was Blondie's Nigel Harrison), and the last two as a quartet after Currie left to attempt a solo career. As the creative differences had already started to show during the end of Currie's time with the group Joan stepped up to take over lead vocals in addition to her rhythm guitar parts. The Runaways really went in opposite directions during the recording of the last two records as a four-piece, with Lita—who was obviously looking to go with a more metal sound—and Joan was digging her heels (and rightfully so, damn it) into the exploding punk rock scene happening during this time. The plug was officially kicked out on The Runaways in 1979, the same year Joan produced The Germs' first and only official full length LP, *GI*.

Not missing a beat, Joan took off to the U.K. that same year to get her solo project on track. She recorded a couple of tracks with the help of ex-Sex Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook, including an early cover of The Arrows' "I Love Rock 'n Roll" that was later re-recorded (yes, *that* version). Returning back to the States soon after to fulfill some Runaways obligations, Joan met producer Kenny Laguna, a fellow musician and songwriter.

Seeing that Joan was serious about moving forward as a solo artist, they decided to work together. She ended up moving to Long Beach, NY (not California where Sandy West hailed from) where Laguna was based. Laguna traveled to London with Jett and a grip of different musicians to record her first LP. Simply entitled *Joan Jett*, it was released on the Ariola label in the U.K. in May 1980. After coming back home, Joan and Laguna went to twenty-three (yes,

twenty-three) major record labels with the hopes of getting her LP released here in the States. Each and every one of them passed, some even suggested what she "needed to do." Fuck that.

Exhausted with the labels not getting onboard with Jett's and his vision, Laguna dipped into his kid's college savings to help start Blackheart Records with Joan. They released *Joan Jett* in the U.S. themselves. The whole album did pretty damn well for an independent release, literally being sold out of the trunk of Laguna's Cadillac at shows back in the U.S. It did so well, in fact, that they ended up having Neil Bogart's Boardwalk Records label re-release it the following year, only with a different album title, *Bad Reputation*. The momentum was finally starting to happen and Joan needed to wrangle her band, The Blackhearts, together. Although Laguna helped her get her lineup going, he was somewhat financially hesitant about having to pay a band on the regular. Joan—the wonderfully steadfast Joan—saw it happening no other way. She needed a band, and she was right.

Old Los Angeles punker legend has it that X's John Doe plunked around with Jett, helping out with the people coming in to audition. He had mentioned to Joan that guitarist Eric Ambel and bassist Gary Ryan (both playing with F-Word's Rik L. Rik at the time) might be a good fit, and they both worked out great. The last piece of the Blackhearts puzzle was finding a drummer, and Danny O'Brien, who had played with San Francisco's Avengers, rounded up the lineup. After a short tour in Europe, O'Brien was out and the rest of the band moved to Long Beach, NY and started looking for a new drummer, which they found with Lee Crystal (who had played with former New York Dolls guitarist Sylvain Sylvain).

Touring relentlessly up until spring/summer 1981, the band reached its crossroads when they went back to the U.K. to record their second full length, *I Love Rock 'n Roll* (where they also re-recorded that Arrows cover of the same name I spoke of earlier). During the time in the studio, Ambel got replaced with another guitar player, Ricky Byrd, who seemed to be the better fit for the band. Talk about the right place at the right time for Byrd, because Jett's second album is the one that kicked the doors open



LAURA COLLINS | @LAURACOLLINSART

By the end of 1975, The Runaways were ready to go, already having played their first official gig at the Whisky a Go Go in Hollywood.

All five girls were under the age of eighteen.

internationally for her and her band. There was an advertisement for *I Love Rock 'n Roll* in the trade papers and magazines during the time it was blowing up all over the charts, reminding everyone and anyone who was reading that twenty-three labels had passed on the same exact band. Heh.

I've always admired musicians who have stuck to their guns, especially when the odds seem stacked high against them, no matter the trends. Fuck trends. I equate the dying breed of steadfast artists like Joan Jett to other greats like Lemmy Kilmister or Joey Ramone, two icons who were good friends of hers. These artists saw their true passion

through, no more, no less. And any one of you being an asshole, dismissing Joan because she's a woman, need to pull your head out of your ass, because when she's going for it onstage or when her records are spinning, it doesn't make a goddamned bit of difference. Good rock'n'roll is good rock'n'roll, and nothing can touch that.

The years following to the present day, Joan Jett has done quite well for herself. She continues to hold down a recording and touring version of the Blackhearts on her own terms. She also kept Blackheart Records alive, the label that she and Kenny Laguna started when she first struck out on her own

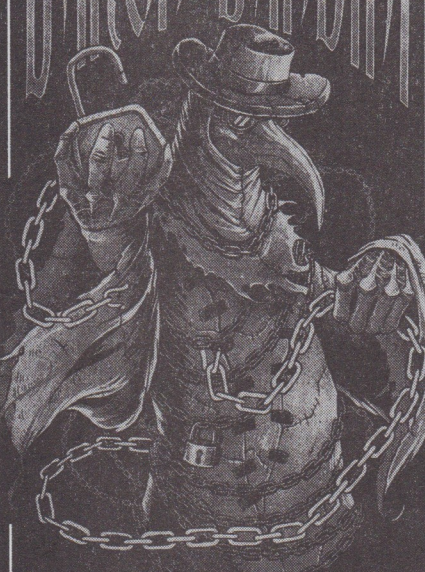
almost forty(!) years ago. As I'm writing this, Joan will turn sixty years young September 22, 2018 and there's a documentary about her, *Bad Reputation*, hitting the theatres around the same time.

That's a hell of a lot to accomplish despite an industry that often dismisses what you're doing as a losing battle. In this case, the only losers are the ones who never believed in her to begin with.

Much love and respect, Joan.

—Designated Dale
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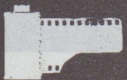
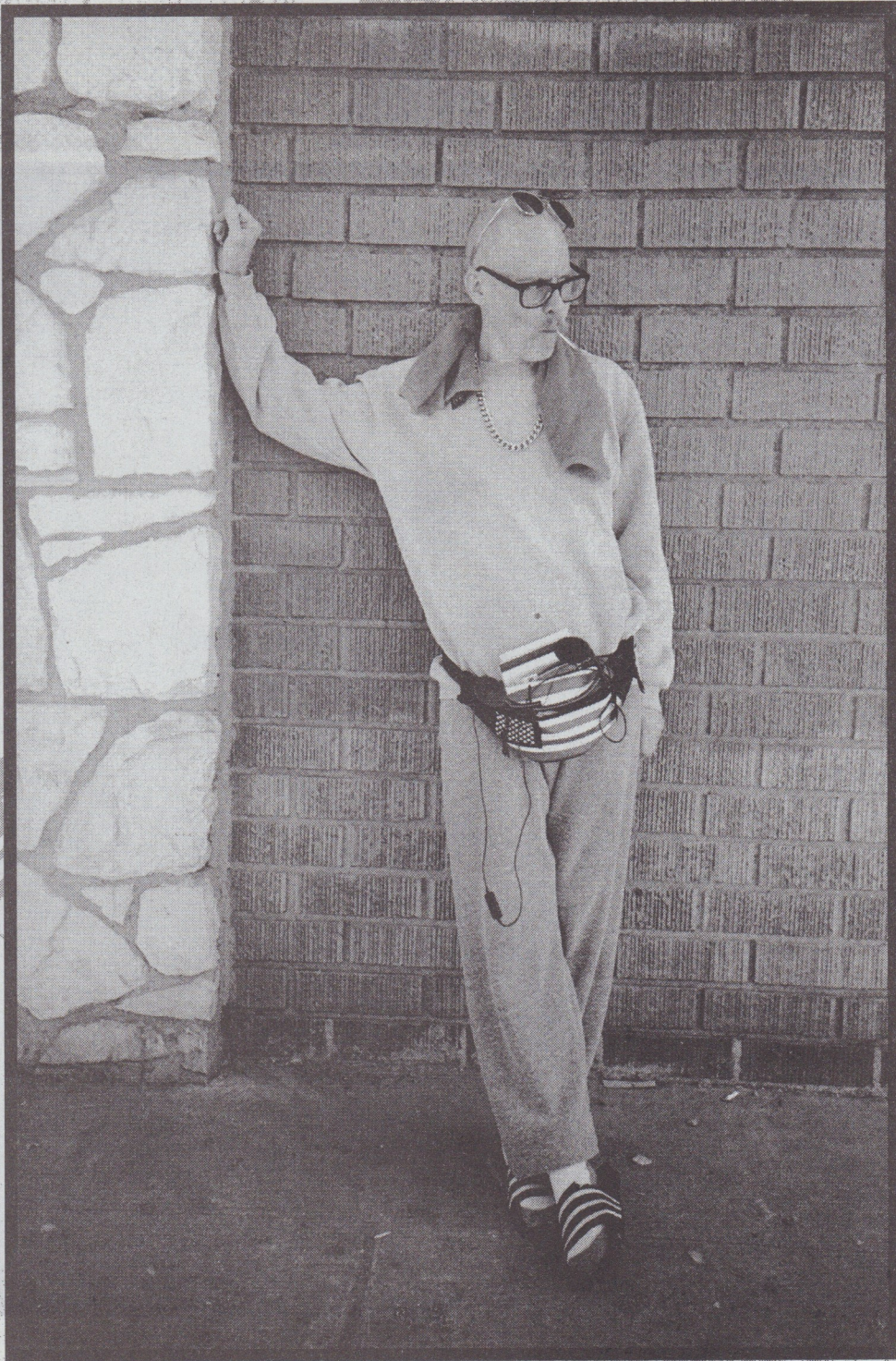


DOLLAR SIGNS
 THIS WILL HAUNT ME

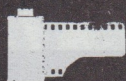
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CHICO SIMIO # 69

"WHERE HAD YOU
BEEN ALL MY
LIFE?"

- ART -

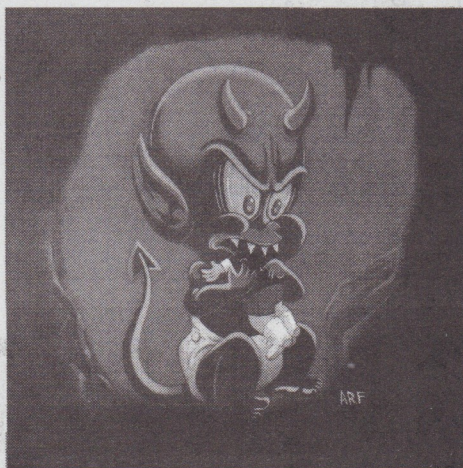
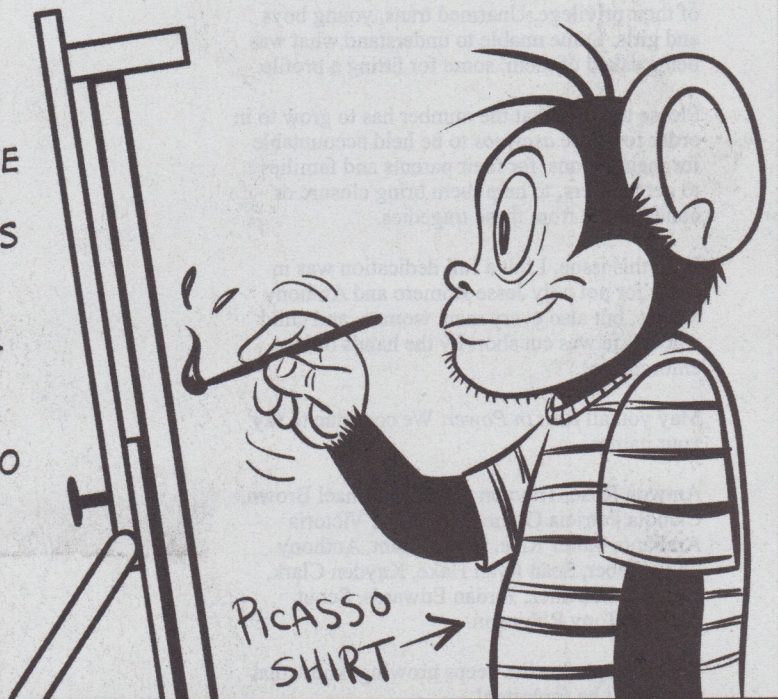
I'VE FINALLY CONQUERED MY FEAR OF PAINTING IN OILS. I'D PAINTED IN ACRYLIC FOR SO MANY YEARS THAT I FIGURED OILS WERE COMPLETELY OUT OF MY LEAGUE. I AM SO HAPPY THAT I DECIDED TO DIVE IN AND USE THEM ONCE AND FOR ALL! I FREAKIN' LOVE PAINTING AGAIN! OILS TOTALLY RENEWED MY PASSION FOR PAINTING.

SINCE I'VE BEEN USING THEM, I'VE RECEIVED MORE PAINTING COMMISSIONS THAN EVER BEFORE AND I'M GLAD I'LL SOON HAVE MORE TIME TO DEVOTE TO FURTHERING MY SKILLS.

MY PAINTINGS RIGHT NOW ARE ON THE SMALL SIDE, BUT I'M PLANNING TO START PAINTING REALLY BIG CANVASES SOON. MAYBE WHEN I'M GOOD ENOUGH, I'LL START SHOPPING MY PAINTINGS TO GALLERIES AND HOPEFULLY LAND SOME EXHIBITIONS.

I DON'T NOW WHY I WAS SO AFRAID TO PAINT IN OILS...

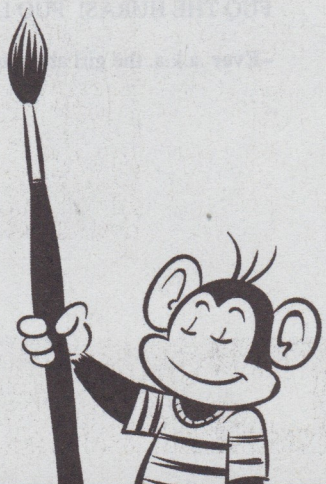
BUT BETTER LATE
THAN NEVER!



THIS IS MY MOST RECENT
PAINTING ENTITLED:
"EAT THE RICH"

IF YOU'D LIKE TO COMMIS-
SION A PAINTING, I CAN BE
REACHED AT:

artcartoons@gmail.com





PURO PINCHE POETRY Y CUENTOS

EDITED BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND EUGENIA NICOLE

You won't be
forgotten!

Rest in power.

I find myself saying this over and over again...
far too often. Not only for Jesse James Romero
from our neighborhood in Boyle Heights, but for
Anthony Vargas in East Los. Across the U.S.,
our youth is being targeted by police, ones who
have taken an oath to protect and serve.

Gunned down in cold blood on our sidewalks by
people who felt they were above the law because
of their privilege. Unarmed trans, young boys
and girls. Some unable to understand what was
being asked of them, some for fitting a profile.

Please tell me what the number has to grow to in
order for these *asesinos* to be held accountable
for their actions, for their parents and families
to get answers, to help them bring closure or
condolences from these tragedies.

With this issue, I felt a full dedication was in
order for not only Jesse Romero and Anthony
Vargas, but also every man, woman, and child
whose life was cut short by the hands of law
enforcement.

May you all *Rest in Power*. We continue to say
your names.

Antwon Rose, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown,
Claudia Patricia Gómez González, Victoria
Arellano, Tamir Rice, Oscar Grant, Anthony
"AJ" Weber, Sean Ryan Hake, Kayden Clark,
Gonzalo Martinez, Jordan Edwards, Scout
Schultz, Tony Robinson.

Even though this list keeps growing, know that
you won't be forgotten!

FUQ THE HURAS! FUQ I.C.E.!

—Ever .a.k.a. the girl about town

When our bodies are weapons (For Jesse James Romero)

Born with original sin
In the color of our skin
Brown babies with bold becomings
Because grew up in the bad hood
Tell him to be good
Do not run
Do not walk
Do not be beautiful
Born blazing sun since first breath
He's been fighting his 14 years
without knowing that one day
The bronze of his glow
would fade on the asphalt
This boy from Boyle Heights
begotten of the streets where
Brown Berets still reside
Because wrong place
Wrong time
Wrong is wrong is wrong
And the blue boys
With the guns
Have wronged our rights
Before we all die
for being born brown
We will use our bodies
As billboards
Look at me
Brave despite your bondage
There is a story here
which repeats
You will beat me
until I defeat myself

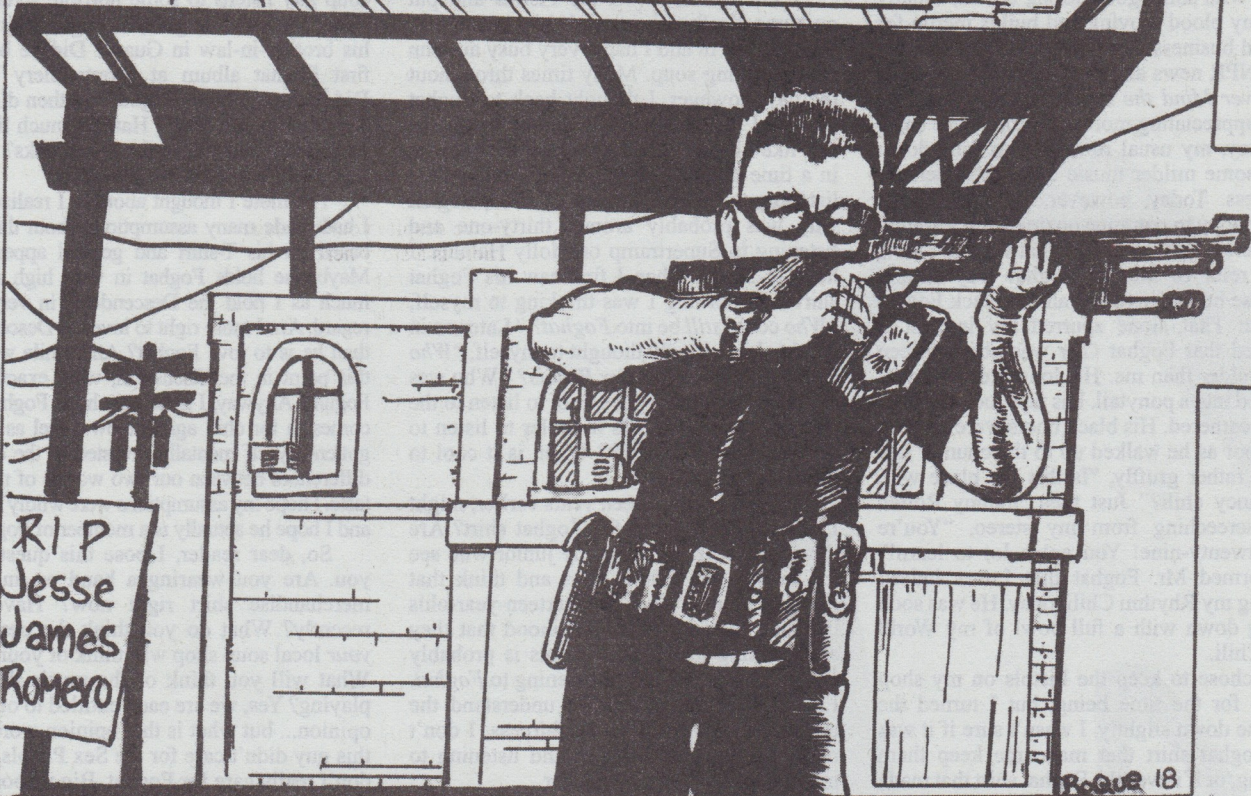
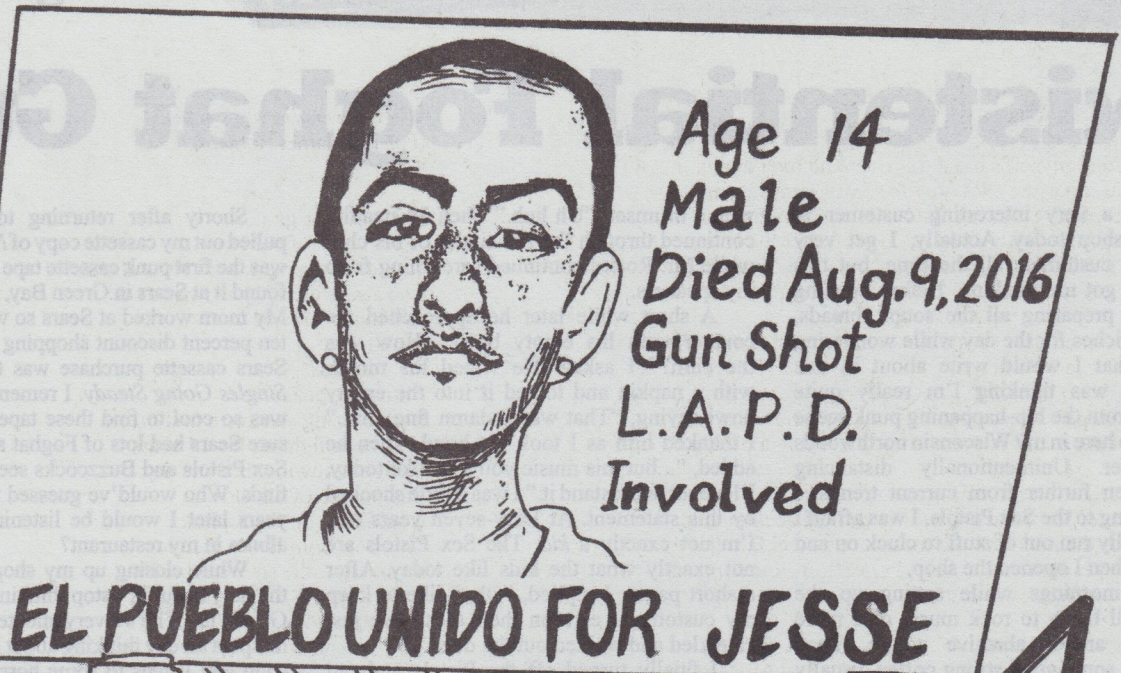
On this bloody border
of badges and barrios

We are not bound by your orders
and my brothers will defy
all the blades you belt out
We are no longer
bystanders as you shoot
We are breastbone of brave mothers
who will fight for each other
The burden of your badge will collapse
on the floor
covered in all the blood you spilled

Fuck the police
our bodies are weapons
See me here unafraid
This is war

—Iris De Anda
@lawriterunderground





ROQUE 18



THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

Heck, how do I
know he's not
in Foghat?

Existential Foghat Guy

I had a very interesting customer in my soup shop today. Actually, I get very interesting customers all the time, but this guy really got me thinking. Before opening up, I was preparing all the soups, breads, and sandwiches for the day while wondering exactly what I would write about in this column. I was thinking I'm really quite detached from the hip-happening punk scene of today up here in my Wisconsin northwoods soup diner. Unintentionally distancing myself even further from current trends, I was listening to the Sex Pistols. I was afraid I would finally run out of stuff to cluck on and on about, then I opened the shop.

Most mornings while setting up the shop, I will listen to rock music of a more aggressive and/or abrasive nature. That, along with some good strong coffee, usually gets my blood moving and builds inertia for a good business day. This morning, I started with NPR news and then naturally migrated to *Never Mind the Bullocks*, an album I've been appreciating more and more these days. Anyway, my usual routine is to tone down with some milder music once I'm open for business. Today, however, the Sex Pistols were happy to continue oozing from my shop speakers, and in walks Foghat Guy.

I refer to him as Foghat Guy simply because he was wearing an old black Foghat T-shirt. That alone spurred my interest. I guessed that Foghat Guy was about fifteen years older than me. His long grey hair was braided into a ponytail. His face looked rough and weathered. His black boots were loud on my floor as he walked up to the counter and asked rather gruffly, "Is this the place with the fancy chili?" Just then, Johnny Rotten was screeching from my stereo, "You're only twenty-nine! You got a lot to learn!" I informed Mr. Foghat that I was indeed serving my Rhythm Chili today. He was soon sitting down with a full bowl of my World War Chili.

I chose to keep the Pistols on my shop stereo for the time being, but I turned the volume down slightly. I wasn't sure if it was the Foghat shirt that made me keep them playing, or if it was the Foghat shirt that made me turn it down. Either way, this fella didn't exactly seem ready to join in at the chorus. He ate a few spoonfuls and looked around at all the Polish knick-knacks decorating my dining room. "So what makes it Rhythm?" he asked between gulps. I told him that's a long story that has to do with a local prankster

with a drumset. "Uh huh." Then he steadily continued through the remainder of his chili while Mr. Rotten continued screeching from my speakers.

A short while later he approached the counter with his empty bowl. "How was the chili?" I asked. He wiped his mouth with a napkin and tossed it into the empty bowl saying, "That was a damn fine chili." I thanked him as I took the bowl. Then he added, "...but this music you kids like today, I'll never understand it." I was a little shocked by this statement. At forty-seven years old, I'm not exactly a *kid*. The Sex Pistols are not exactly what the kids like today. After a short pause, I replied, "Oh, I like to keep my customers' ears on their toes." He just chuckled and walked out the door.

I finally turned off the Pistols and put on some Kraftwerk instead. My lunch rush soon kicked in and I had a very busy autumn day of selling soup. Many times throughout the day, however, I thought back to Foghat Guy and his comment. It almost made me feel like I had zig-zagged around the decades in a time machine. When I was sixteen and listening to the punk flavor of 1987, Foghat Guy was probably around thirty-one and listening to Supertramp or Molly Hatchet. I have to admit, when I first saw his Foghat shirt this morning I was thinking to myself, "*Who could still be into Foghat?*" Later on in the day I mockingly thought to myself, "*Who could still be into the Sex Pistols?*" Who was chuckling at who? Was it cool to listen to the Sex Pistols in 1987? Is it cooler to listen to the Sex Pistols in 2018? When is it cool to listen to Foghat?

If I were born fifteen years earlier, might I be the one wearing the Foghat shirt? Are there punks fifteen years my junior who see me in my Sex Pistols shirt and think that *I'm* the relic? What are sixteen-year-olds listening to today? The likelihood that they are listening to the Sex Pistols is probably just as slim as if they are listening to *Foghat*. Foghat Guy said he didn't understand the music I was playing. In all fairness, I don't really think I could understand listening to much Foghat, either. Whatever.

So, it was about three years ago when I first met my now brother-in-law Czarek in Poland. He heard that I was into punk music so he gifted me a cool bootleg Sex Pistols shirt. I had never considered getting a Sex Pistols shirt before, but now I had one and it seemed timelessly cool.

Shorty after returning to Wisconsin, I pulled out my cassette copy of *Never Mind....* It was the first punk cassette tape I ever bought. I found it at Sears in Green Bay, priced at \$3.99. My mom worked at Sears so we always got a ten percent discount shopping there. My next Sears cassette purchase was the Buzzcocks' *Singles Going Steady*. I remember thinking it was so cool to find these tapes at Sears. I'm sure Sears had lots of Foghat at that time, but Sex Pistols and Buzzcocks seemed like lucky finds. Who would've guessed that some forty years later I would be listening to the same album in my restaurant?

While closing up my shop at the end of the day, I couldn't stop thinking about Foghat Guy. What if he's a very talented musician and he spent all day thinking about how that young soup guy listens to some horrible screeching music? What if he got that Foghat shirt from his brother-in-law in Guam? Did he buy his first Foghat album at Montgomery Ward? Did he first get into Foghat and then discover Supertramp and Molly Hatchet much like the Sex Pistols led me to the Buzzcocks? Heck, how do I know he's not *in* Foghat?

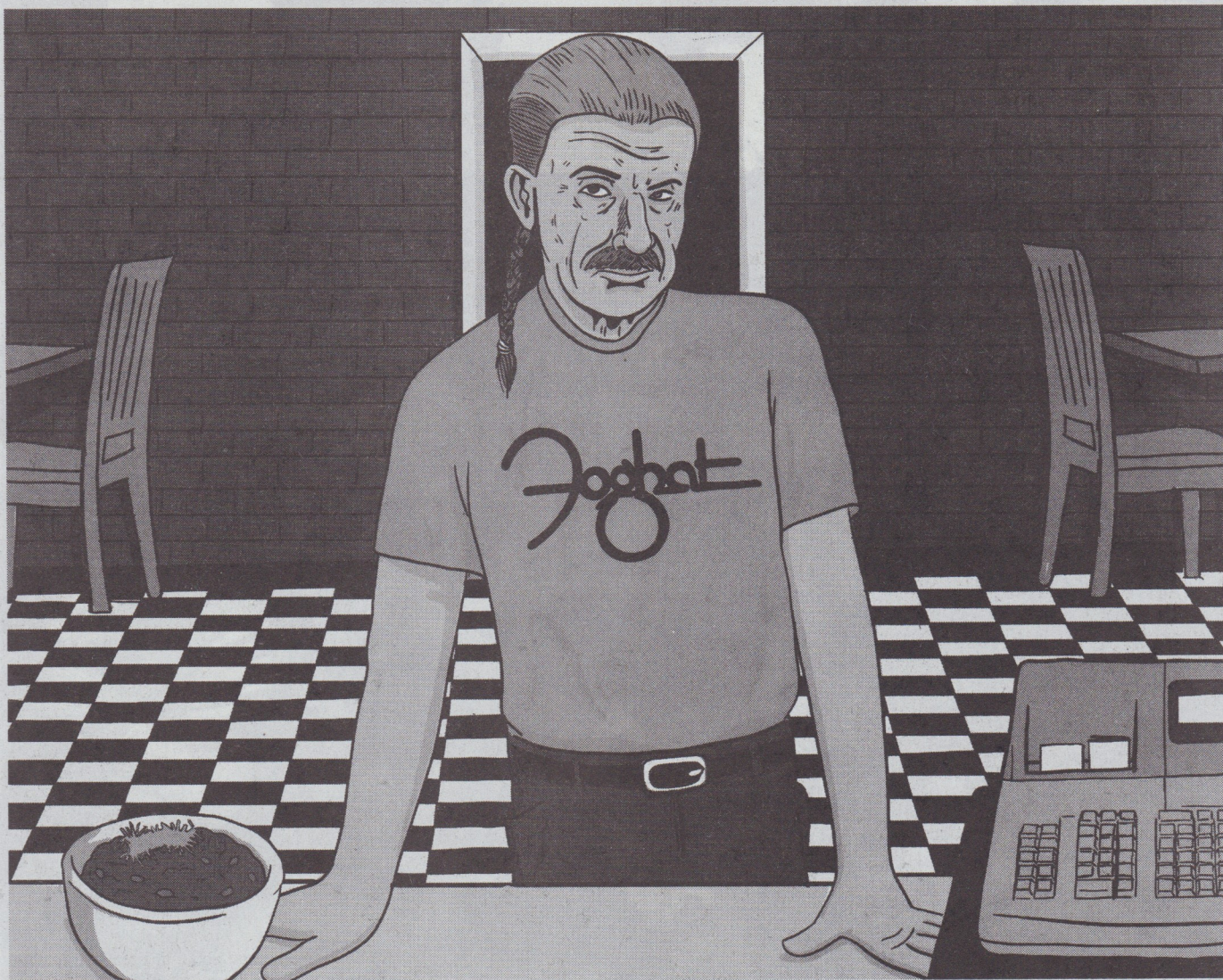
The more I thought about it, I realized that I had made many assumptions about this fella based on his T-shirt and general appearance. Maybe he holds Foghat in very high regard, much as I hold the Descendents in very high regard. Am I more right to love the Descendents than he is to love Foghat? And while we're at this point in the discussion, what exactly *is* a Foghat? Anyway, I genuinely hope Foghat Guy comes in for chili again. Now I feel as if I've gotten myself mentally invested in the distinct differences between our two worlds of musical taste. I hope my assumptions were wildly wrong, and I hope he actually *is* a member of Foghat.

So, dear reader, I pose this question to you. Are you wearing a band or musician merchandise shirt right now? Have you recently? What do you think the person at *your* local soup shop will think of your shirt? What will you think of the music they are playing? Yes, we are each entitled to our own opinion... but what is that opinion worth? So this guy didn't care for the Sex Pistols, and I don't really care for Foghat. Big whoop.

Dinghole Report #167: Well, Well, Well... Ruckus Tools in the Wellhouse!

(Rhythm Chicken's Drumset sighting #1)

You may remember from last issue that our hero played his annual small town Fourth



CODEY RICHARDS

Am I more right to love the Descendents than he is to love Foghat? And while we're at this point in the discussion, what exactly is a Foghat?

of July parade yet again. Well, the summer has certainly been a nonstop clusterfudge of too much to do, and my drum set was crammed in the back of my car for a good two weeks before I found the time to put them away. Finally, late one night after work, I remembered to dump them out of my car and into the wellhouse behind my shop. For you city folk, the wellhouse is a small shack which holds the well pump and pressure tank for your onsite water supply. My wellhouse also has a little extra space for keeping a crappy drumset hidden away from prying eyes.

With the summer business in full swing, I soon forgot my audio weapons were out there. Suddenly, a lady from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources decided to show up unannounced to inspect the closed-circuit status of this well system, or something like that. I unlocked the wellhouse and let her walk in, completely forgetting about the Chicken tools inside. She proceeded with her inspection duties while I went back to serving soup.

A little while later, Mrs. DNR explained to me the few precautions

concerning my well system and reminded me of my upcoming water sample test. I looked over the paperwork she handed me, said thank you, and asked if there was anything else. She was about to walk out the door, but turned back to reply, "Well, one other thing. You might want to change the lock on your wellhouse. It appears as if the Rhythm Chicken is hiding his drums in there." I gave her a blank, emotionless stare.

—Rhythm Chicken



Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column

Chris Boarts Larson, www.slugandlettuce.net | fb.me/slugandlettuce



The Rad Ladies of Punk from the photo show: RVA Hardcore Punk, 2003-2008

In light of recent current events, I am even more inspired by all the rad, strong, powerful women in my life. I recently did a photo show focused on bands that played in Richmond between 2003-2008 and it was a cool realization of how strongly women were represented in that cross-section. Whenever I reflect on my youth, I am fortunate at how many creative, strong women I had as role models and peers.

All my life I have been inspired by women—women in punk, women in art, women in general. Woman who stand up and speak out, especially when it goes against convention or expectation. I am happy to see so many women in bands and to have gotten to a point where it almost doesn't bear pointing out... in fact, a new generation of people don't want to be known as the female drummer or female guitar player in the band. They want to just stand on their own, regardless of gender. I love to see this representation in punk rock so I made a collage of a few of them from the recent photo show I did at Vinyl Conflict in Richmond, VA.

Thank you to all the women who speak truth to power, stand up for what they believe in, fight against expectations, find their own ground to stand on, don't take any shit, forge new paths, are true to themselves, and inspire everyone around them.

In this collage: After The Bombs, Lost Cause, Black September, ATU, Optimus Crime, Red Threat, Gorilla Angreb, Man The Conveyors, Condenada, Attaque, I Object, To What End?, Kylesa, and Ballast.

All the photos from the both photo shows are viewable on the Slug & Lettuce Facebook page in the photo albums.
 RVA Hardcore Punk 1997-2002 Photos by CBL at Vinyl Conflict
 RVA Hardcore Punk 2003-2008 Photos by CBL at Vinyl Conflict

—Chris Boarts Larson

WEST OAKLAND PUNKS WITH LUNCH

Interview with
Alejandra Del Pinal,
Founder of West
Oakland Punks
With Lunch
by Rosie Gonce

Photos by Rosie Gonce
Layout by Lauren Denitzio

Every Sunday at a West Oakland communal-living warehouse, a group of people gather around a kitchen table, prepare sandwiches, and gather supplies to distribute to their local homeless community. But this isn't your typical, church-inspired, assembly of do-gooders serving the less-fortunate. This group of individuals with their tattoos and nose rings, mohawks, and band shirts, are slathering peanut butter and jelly onto bread while listening to The Minutemen, discussing the various punk shows they all attended the previous night. The group calls themselves the "West Oakland Punks With Lunch," and have dedicated their Sunday afternoons every week for nearly three years to putting together sandwiches, snacks, pet food, hygiene products, and harm reduction supplies to later distribute to people living in homelessness. There are volunteers who have been there since the beginning and there are first-timers, all pitching in to slice tomatoes, cut the cheese, joke about cutting the cheese, and scoop dog food into ziplocked bag portions.

A few punk albums and cigarette breaks later, forty PB & Js and forty turkey sandwiches have been prepared and bagged. Bananas, apples, granola bars and dog food are organized

into boxes, and the "prep" part of the day is finished. Before going out to the "distro" portion of the day, the group comes together to go over guidelines—one of which is, "no '-isms' are allowed. All the bad 'isms,' we don't wanna hear 'em"—among other basic rules like giving out one to two sandwiches per person. Alejandra, the founder of Punks With Lunch, adds thoughtfully at the end of the meeting, "The last thing I want to say is thank you for being here." As everyone disperses she yells out, "And it's okay to make mistakes!" There are smiles all around and some sporadic cheering and clapping.

After loading up some cars, the group heads over to their usual spot under the freeway near a homeless encampment where Punks With Lunch station themselves with fold-out tables and personally hand out the goods to anyone who approaches. They may not look like your typical volunteers but they are definitely doing our West Oakland homeless community a hell of a lot of good. But possibly the most inspiring aspects of the organization is their non-judgmental approach, their welcoming attitude towards participants and volunteers, and their perseverance in the face of what seems like an endless problem.

Rosie: What is Punks With Lunch and how did it get started?

Alejandra: Punks With Lunch is a not-for-profit, DIY outreach organization. We give out food, hygiene supplies, and we also do harm reduction, which is a needle exchange. It started with just a few friends and myself. We just wanted to do something so we all put in a couple bucks and went to the dollar store and got some sandwich-making supplies and went around and gave them out. And it grew from there to the point where we're able to do a needle exchange and give out more supplies. We're able to reach and be part of the community that we're in.

Rosie: What initially prompted you to do this?

Alejandra: I wanted to do it because I was working in fine dining at the time in San Francisco and we were making food for really wealthy people, like techies. I was working in the SoMa (South of Market) area and you would see a lot of people who were out asking for food and money all the time. I would leave my work, which was beautiful and had really expensive food, to go out to that. I just felt like I wanted to do something different than what I had been doing as a cook. And cook for people... like the people.

Rosie: People who actually needed it.

Alejandra: Yeah, totally.

Rosie: Why is it called "punks" with lunch? What is the connection of the punk culture to serving the homeless community?

Alejandra: Well, we're all punks who started it. And it's a lot of punks who come to Punks With Lunch. We're connected because we book a lot of shows. That's how we make our money, is by booking shows. You know, punk ethics is—you want to do something, you do it yourself. And there are a lot of people in our community who also experience homelessness and use drugs intravenously. We want to make sure that the members of our community are safe, by having clean needles and Narcan (an emergency treatment of narcotic overdose). So, we're reaching out to our punk community, as well as the greater West Oakland community.

Rosie: You started almost three years ago, this coming September (2018). Was harm reduction always a part of it?

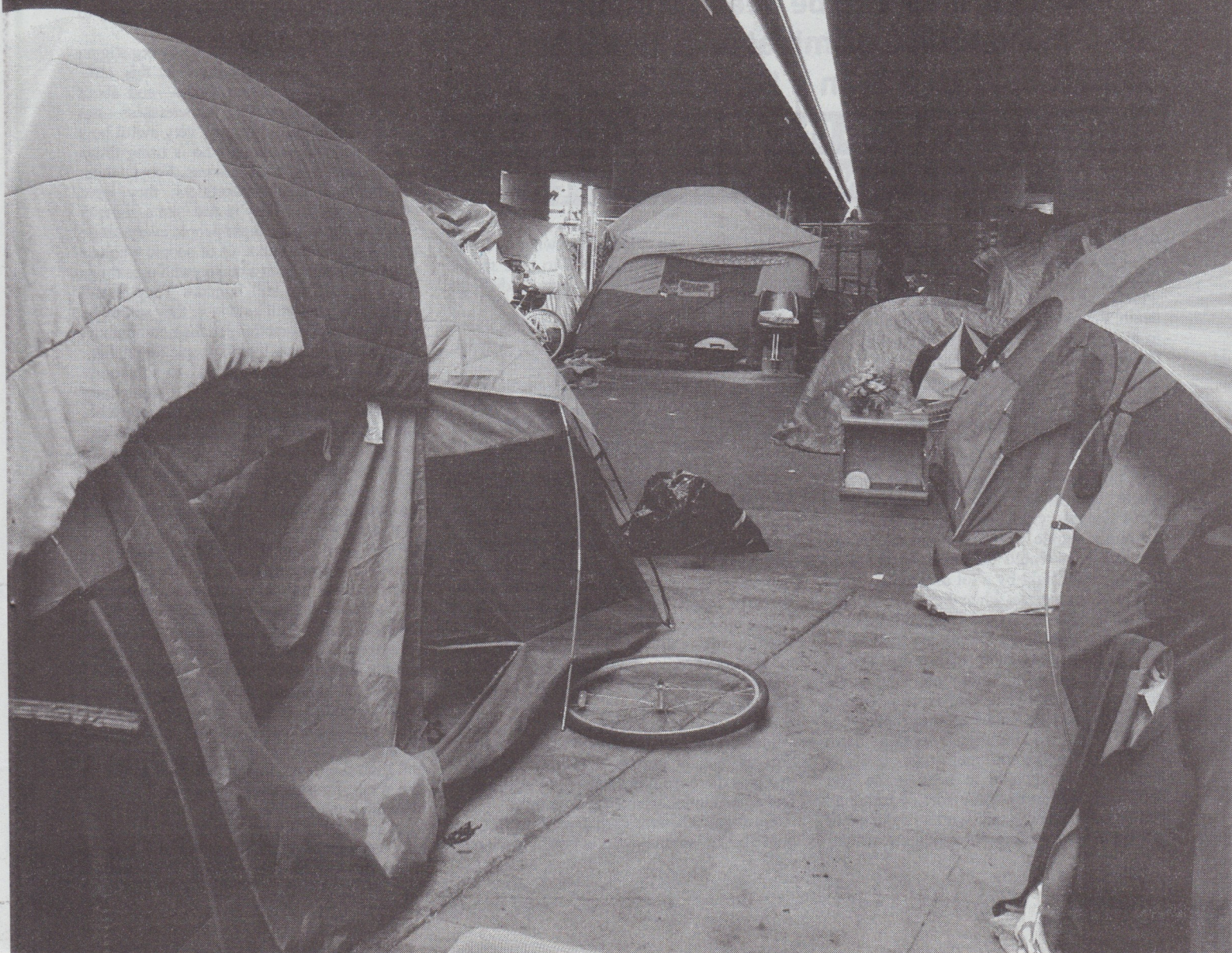
Alejandra: No, it was not. It started off initially as just giving out sandwiches to people. But as people were going around, we were noticing a lot of syringes on the ground. People who started volunteering here were also involved in harm reduction and they kept bringing up the needle exchange. I didn't

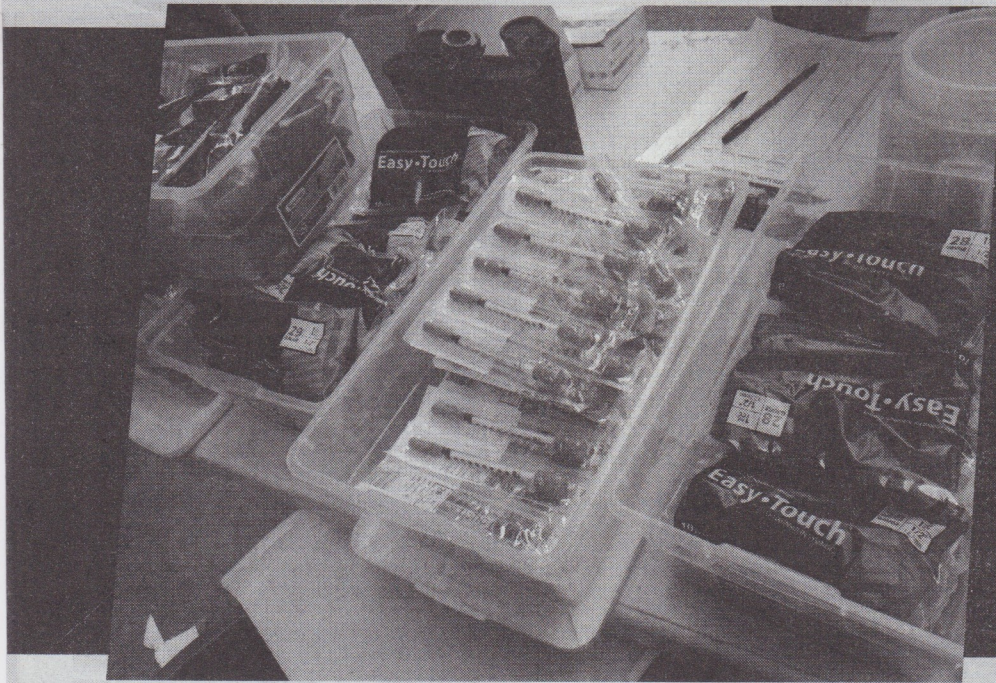
even know what harm reduction was, so it was probably about six months into Punks With Lunch that we started giving out clean syringes. And it's grown to the point where we're an actual needle exchange, where we're able to bring people needles and they're able to bring back their dirty ones. So it kind of grew out of necessity. It also broke down a barrier that was there before. People always come by and bring food but not everybody is okay or comfortable with drug use. When we're giving out clean needles, it shows that we're like, "We know you're still human, and we want you to be safe. So... here's some needles and a sandwich." [laughs]

Rosie: Yeah, I think sometimes people get confused or just don't really know what harm reduction is. Can you just explain a little about that? What is the purpose of needle exchange and some of the harm reduction supplies that you provide?

Alejandra: So... a really good example of everyday harm reduction is wearing your seat belt when you're driving. You know, you wear your seatbelt to make sure that you're safe. If you're in a car accident, it prevents you from flying out the window and getting hurt. And what needle exchange does is it keeps people safe in that time that they're

When we're giving out clean
needles, it shows that we're
like, **"WE KNOW YOU'RE STILL
HUMAN, AND WE WANT YOU
TO BE SAFE.** So... here's some
needles and a sandwich."





People are able to be seen as something more than a criminal or a junkie or something more than a homeless person. So, HARM REDUCTION IS EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES.

using. If they don't have access to clean needles there is an increased possibility that they will reuse needles and share needles which can spread disease and even cause death. People deserve to be kept healthy—or to have access to supplies to be healthy—so that when they decide that they want to quit—or even if they're going to live their whole life like that—they're the healthiest they can be. And this is giving people the ability to do that.

Harm reduction is also, for me and for this organization, is also meeting people where they're at, without judgment. We don't deny services to anybody. There are definitely people who come and access our services who would definitely not be seen in the best of light by a lot of people, but in that moment in time, when they're coming to us, we're able to see past that and we have genuine connections. People are able to be seen as something more than a criminal or a junkie or something more than a homeless person. So, harm reduction is empowering people to make decisions for themselves.

Rosie: Can an individual obtain harm reduction supplies on their own and just hand it out to people in need or do you need certification or some sort of training? I'm wondering how that works in the event readers would want to do something similar

where they live. Basically, what are the actionable steps they'd need to take to get access to that stuff? How easy or difficult would it be?

Alejandra: An individual can obtain these supplies and distribute themselves. Anyone can do this work in California. We are lucky to be in Oakland where we have little to no pushback on our harm reduction outreach from people in the neighborhood, who could make it hard for people to distribute clean needles and supplies.

The way we started our exchange was by going to already established exchanges and asking for supplies to distribute in our community. We started by just distributing and then collecting used needles in biohazard containers and exchanging for more supplies. It really depends on the county and state in terms of accessibility to harm reduction supplies. A really good resource for how to start a needle exchange would be to check out the Harm Reduction Coalition (harmreduction.org).

Rosie: You emphasize with all your volunteers that come through to come with a non-judgmental attitude. Was that a guideline that was there from the beginning or did you feel a need to incorporate it over time?

Alejandra: When we started, we didn't have a guideline for anything. So, everything we say,

when someone comes and volunteers here, is something we've learned. And it's a lesson that we've had to learn here. So, for me, it came across when I saw a person who I don't get along with, who I'm really not okay with, in my everyday life. They use intravenously, and I had to kind of check myself. "Why is it okay that I can give needles to somebody whom I don't know their history, whom has probably done similar things but I'm not going to give needles to this person I know?" And it didn't seem right and it didn't seem fair. So put that one in there for myself—without really knowing the context of harm reduction. Because it's something that I had to check myself on.

Rosie: So, it came through self-reflection and then you saw that it benefitted the whole community to approach them like that?

Alejandra: Totally. Then I started working at the Homeless Youth Alliance and that's one of their main things: harm reduction is non-judgmental access to services. We don't want to create that barrier. They don't owe us anything to get their supplies. That's not why we're here.

Rosie: What do you see as some of the more common misconceptions about homelessness and drug use that might make people jump to judgments about them?

Alejandra: I think there is a really big stigma about people who use drugs in this area. People talk about homelessness—and about people who experience homelessness—not in a favorable light. It's very, very awful how people will see someone who is using drugs and experiencing homelessness. People think they're lazy, they're worthless, they have no use to society. They're just like a zombie. And you know, I see these people every single weekend. I work with a lot of people who use drugs and I have been a person who uses drugs and... people are still humans. They're still productive. They still hold jobs, they still make art, they still do something in their community. They're still human. I think people forget that.

People forget to say "hi" to somebody or they don't want to say "hi" to somebody because it makes them feel uncomfortable that somebody is living in homelessness and so it's easier to turn away. I think people are quick to come to judgment about that, but when you actually sit down to talk to people you will understand—maybe not understand *why* they're in the position that they're in—but you'll see them as more than just homeless. They are a person.

Rosie: What are some of the challenges you've faced as a non-profit organization?

Alejandra: Funding. Funding and consistent volunteers. Getting stuff done on time. Getting supplies. We hit hurdle after hurdle and we just kind of roll with the punches. We've learned a lot. We also weren't structured as a non-profit. Some people come up with an idea, they figure everything out, and then they start it. We just kind of did it and we're figuring everything out. So that's been the biggest hurdle, but it's also been the most rewarding because we're able to do it how we want to do it.



Rosie: Have you come across any challenges with any of the participants you serve?

Alejandra: I mean, you see a bunch of white people come in to your neighborhood with a bunch of sandwiches and syringes, not everyone is going to be really stoked to see that. But we understand where we are, and we understand who we are and you're not going to make everyone happy and that's totally chill. But we have stuff in place that when that happens nobody gets hurt. Nobody's been hurt. It's probably only been twice, in the last few years, that something crazy has happened.

Rosie: Like just some verbal harassment? But nothing that's not manageable?

Alejandra: Yeah.

Rosie: And what about challenges for yourself? You mentioned that you work full-time with the Homeless Youth Alliance. Has that been challenging, maybe emotionally, to just give yourself so much to this mission?

Alejandra: Yeah definitely. I mean, it's work that I love to do. I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't love it, but almost every single day, six days of the week I'm working closely with people who are unseen and living in poverty. They share their stories with me and I have the privilege to hear them and it's not always the happiest story. You see a lot of people fall through the cracks. You see a lot of people who have experienced terrible racism, sexism, homophobia, gender-based violence, all kinds of stuff, and that takes a toll on you after a while. I've seen some pretty brutal stuff.

Rosie: Is there anything you do to take care of yourself, mentally and emotionally?

Alejandra: Oh yeah. I play music—well I don't play music. I'm in a band.

Rosie: You're a singer?

Alejandra: Yeah. I can't play an instrument. But yeah, it's something. I run. I work out. I went to Guatemala.

Rosie: So, taking time off to recoup.

Alejandra: Yeah, totally. It's important also; you're a punk and you want to be this kind of tough person who's like, "Nothing fucking bothers me. I've seen it before." And the reality is, is that I have seen it before but it's letting yourself feel those emotions and not just being this tough person all the time. So that's something that I learned.

Rosie: To just let yourself feel it?

Alejandra: Yeah. And it doesn't make you any less tough. It's just like... people fucking die. I had a participant who I became close with die about a month ago and that hit me really hard. I've had a lot of friends die. But I've learned to deal with it a little bit better, in a healthier way than before.

Rosie: How do you feel that Punks With Lunch has changed you as a person?

Alejandra: I've learned a lot about myself after doing this work. It has definitely changed my life for the better. It's helped me respect people more. We're all angsty. I was an angsty-ass person up until I was twenty-six years old. And I'm a little less angsty now. I'm a little less "hate the world." I'm angry, very upset, but it's a fire that keeps you going.

Rosie: You're channeling that energy in a positive way.

Alejandra: Definitely.

Rosie: Is there anything you wish the general population was more aware of, in regards to the homeless population or the opioid crisis?

Alejandra: I think everyone should know about Narcan, especially if you're in an area where there is a high overdose rate, like San Francisco or Oakland.

Rosie: Can you explain what Narcan is?

Alejandra: Narcan is opiate overdose reversal drug. So, if someone is overdosing you can inject them with Narcan and they'll come back to life. It's amazing.

Rosie: So, you think people should be more aware of it and have it on them?

Alejandra: Yes. There have been times that I've Narcan-ed people and I don't even know who they are. They're just somebody I've seen on the street. So that would be one thing. And also... say "hi" to people. If you don't have money and somebody asks you for change, say "I'm sorry, but you have a good day," or "good luck" or something. Don't ignore somebody because these are people who are ignored every single day of their lives. Say "hi" once in a while.

Rosie: Treat them like people.

Alejandra: Yeah, you know? Who would've thought?!

Rosie: What are your future goals for Punks With Lunch?

Alejandra: I think we would like to one day have our own spot where we have storage and work out of it and maybe have a storefront. That would be cool. Get a van. Have more money than we have now.

Rosie: So just keep it going and get bigger.

Alejandra: Yeah, just to keep it going, get it more efficient, and see what happens. More comprehensive services for the people we already see. It would be great to have a shower bus someday. We see these people every single weekend, and it would be great to provide them with more services.

punkswithlunch.org
facebook.com/Punkswithlunch
harmreduction.org



LA TUYA

interview by TODD TAYLOR

photos by REBECCA MINJAREZ • OLD HC DUDE • TODD TAYLOR

layout by JESSEE ZEROXED

Punk... it's paradox after paradox. True individuality still comes at a steep price. Legitimate lifers often remain outliers in scenes they helped create. Genuinely fantastic and exciting bands can thrive in the shadows of concrete freeways designed by racist policies to suffocate vibrant, poor working class immigrant neighborhoods, while directly west, Los Angeles, "The Entertainment Capital of the World," looms like a blocky cluster of erect penises. Being born on the wrong side of the tracks (like literally ten different tracks; it's a massive rail yard) and a concrete river is another set of realities. Nope, this interview is not one solely of legitimate gripes and despair. It's about the power of remaining angry and engaged without that anger fully corroding hope, dignity, or compassion. It's about three punks-without-prefix-or-suffix.

When I listen to La Tuya, I hear the grand tradition of East L.A. backyards. I can almost see the dust rise up from the pit as they blast from my speakers. The band is smart, funny, and pissed while their music sounds like blunt instruments honed to sharp melodic points. Think The Stains meet Big Drill Car. Their songs oscillate easily between both Marxes—Karl and Groucho.

La Tuya's pedigree is decades-long, peppered with bands that mostly never had the benefit of legitimate releases when they were active—Butt Acne, Black Jax, Ollin, Our Band Sucks, Peace Pill, and Charm Machine, to name a small handful. Fuck urban colonizers planting branded lifestyle banners in "just discovered" neighborhoods. Resist gentrification and globalization. Celebrate a preexisting beautiful culture—punk and otherwise—aware and respectful of the Tongva, yet leery of all shades and hues of nationalism. Revel in the punk truism that some of the best bands will never be heard beyond their own neighborhoods. Say hello to Jimmy, Scott, and Dale.

La Tuya!

RAZORCAKE 35

I COMMITTED MYSELF TO POVERTY. TO CHASE THE DREAM.

All: [laughter]

Dale: He turned around, and goes, "Hey, Dale! What's going on? We're just makin' some drinks." It was just one of those things like, "Fuck, really?! Such a beautiful day and you're doing this?!" But you get thirsty in the neighborhood. So you got to do what you got to do.

Todd: Here's a quick one—what does La Tuya mean?

Jimmy: "Your mom."

Todd: [chuckles]

Jimmy: No, really.

Todd: [laughter]

Scott: It also means...

Jimmy and Scott: "Yours."

Jimmy: The name was picked because it was something that could go on a flyer that wasn't gonna get censored, but those who knew what it could mean would go, "Whoa."

Dale: People ask me my band's name, and I say "La Tuya." They're like, "No, really," because they all speak Spanish. I go, "It's 'Your Mom,' dude! La Tuya. That's the name of the band."

Todd: Jimmy and I were joking about this before we started the interview—that he and Scott would show up to the interview with workers' nametags on. How difficult was it to be a musician growing up where people made certain assumptions because of your ethnicity?

Jimmy: "Which one's Pedro and which one's Jose?"—that kind of thing? When we grew up in East L.A., we stayed pretty much in East L.A.

Todd: Give people a little historical perspective.

Jimmy: After the initial wave of punk rock in East L.A. and L.A., there was fuck-all we could do. There were no places to play. There were no magazines or record labels that paid any attention to us, and rightly so, because we were all starting bands, *then* learning how to play.

Todd: Yeah, but how is that different than The Germs or the Go-Go's?

Dale: Excellent point.

Jimmy: But at the time, we didn't have a Masque. We didn't have a Vex, in that regard.

Scott: Except the Vex.

Jimmy: Except the Vex that wouldn't let us play because we were too young—thirteen, fourteen.

Todd: Let's set the stage. The landmass for Los Angeles is so big and it's Balkanized. There were dark places in people's maps where they're like, "We're not going to move there. We're not even going to go there."

Jimmy: Right. And that was intentional by the city planners.

Scott: The housing covenant laws.

Jimmy: And the way that they put the freeways. There's a reason why you can't access Beverly Hills via freeway. That was intentional. But they put it literally through the middle of Hollenbeck Park in our fucking neighborhood. They also built those freeways so that we—meaning those of us from this side of town and other undesirable areas—would not be taking the trolleys into those cities. That way, they could also drive through those areas without stopping or knowing what was happening there.

That all factored in, but as far as punk rock and us, we had just missed that initial Vex wave of interest, with Los Illegals, Thee Undertakers, The Stains. All those bands had all kind of dissipated or they had started going into the major clubs and started dealing with major label hell. Whereas, as our cohort Shane White from the Rip Offs described our generation of punks, "We were their bratty little brothers and sisters." We were the kids who were too young to play the clubs. We were playing this very rudimentary, unsophisticated form of punk rock. We were the first generation of the neighborhoods that was distinctly influenced by strictly hardcore or punk rock. The first band that Scott and I had together was Butt Acne. It started off as me and my brother in late '81. Starting off with screwdrivers up and down the neck, screaming, all that bullshit.

Scott: And plugging into the radio.

Jimmy: My first electric was the acoustic guitar. My father used to run youth centers and he had a movie projector. We needed to play loud, so we took a microphone, wrapped it in toilet paper, shoved the mic into the sound hole, and then plugged it into the movie projector. Then my brother screamed. That was our first band. It sounded like two trains crashing into each other, just a wall of shit. A few years later, we started to actually play and Scott ended up playing bass and becoming the vocalist in the band.

That's when the backyards started becoming really important to the local scene because there was, literally, nowhere else to play. That's why we focused the way we did. I played the Cathay de Grande in 1983 with an earlier version of Butt Acne called Six Gun Justice. That was the first and last time I played Hollywood until 1990. In between that, it was playing the backyards because that's where we had gigs.

The yards were not a new thing. People have probably been playing in the yards since around the 1910s. I think our generation was the first to make the yards the focus as opposed to being a springboard. We focused on playing in the backyards specifically.

Scott: We stuck to our neighborhoods. We were kids. We didn't have cars, really. The race thing has always been there. Sadly, it's still there. Everyone has an acclimation period. I didn't really discover what classism and racism were until junior high. I was part of a bussing program that sent East Los kids and South Central kids to Brentwood. Brentwood is the most affluent area. In fact, O.J.'s mansion was right behind our school and I went to school with Jason Simpson. It's when you're called names, but kids do that no matter what. I called Jimmy and Johnny "White Boy Jimmy" and "White Boy Johnny."

Todd: Why'd you call them that?

Scott: Because they were honkies. [laughs]

Jimmy: Because my mother's Danish. The irony is that I dealt with that all through childhood up until the seventh grade. But I also got bussed, into Highland Park, where the school was fifty percent white, fifty percent black, and there were like nine Mexicans. So I went from being a honkey and Paddy to becoming "a greaser," "a spic," and "a wetback." I got the best of both worlds. Primarily, growing up in the neighborhoods, that's how it toughens you up. It teaches you how to survive because if you don't, you get eaten alive.

As far as punk rock, race didn't really a factor in the yards because everybody was Mexican and those who weren't Mexican—we had a friend Leo, who was Vietnamese and of course we fucked with him because he was Vietnamese—but he was the homie *Leo*.

Todd: He was punk.

Scott: That was it. It didn't matter. It wasn't until we went outside of the neighborhoods. Then all of a sudden, you get the things like "taco punk," and "beaner punk," and all that other bullshit. By then, you're all toughened up. You don't give a fuck. Fuck 'em.

Todd: Give me a quintessential backyard show story.

Scott: It was a famous place in Boyle Heights called "Boo-Boo's Pad," which was a house on the corner of Bird and Cornwell streets. A backyard that had some broken old cars. This guy was from a biker family and they let gigs happen there. There was a pit going on. Some bands were playing. This long-haired dude pushed me or something like that.

Jimmy: A guy in a Slayer shirt.

Scott: Thank you, Jimmy. I guess he had knocked me down pretty hard. I might have gotten hurt. I really don't remember. In hindsight, he actually didn't do shit. So, a bunch of people got their ass kicked that night.

Jimmy: We started beating up everybody with a Slayer shirt, and afterwards we went back to him and Scott's like, "No, it was a guy in an AC/DC shirt."

Scott: In fact, I slipped. No one ever pushed me. I was cut and I think I hit his teeth in the pit.

Jimmy: There was blood.

Scott: It was my fault. I ran into the guy. I hit his tooth.

Todd: With your fist?

Scott: No, no. With my head or something. So, I cut myself and I cut him and a bunch of people got beat up that day. [Sad, remorseful laughter.]

Todd: How about you, Jimmy?

Jimmy: It was me and Scott, too. We were playing at a backyard at 1st and Velasco in Boyle Heights. Our friend's girlfriend, Wendy, got jumped by some skinheads from South Bay. There were three girls, three guys, and they decided they were going to run the party. Wendy left and they were throwing bottles at the back of her truck as she drove off. Me, Scott, and everyone else followed them out. They were chest thumping, doing skinhead things that skinheads do. Me and Scott went up to them, like, "So, you guys are skinheads, huh?" Trying to be friendly with them. "Yeah! South Bay Skins." "We used to be skinheads, too."

Todd: Which you guys did used to be.

Jimmy: Yeah. They asked, "You guys lose your pride?" "No, we just got smart. That was a really fuckin' dumb thing you just did." They said, "Really? Why?" I said, "Take a look around you." Everyone in the party had lined up on each side of the street. It was a full yard. There's six skinheads and a whole party of pissed people.

Dale: So it was like the end scene in *The Warriors* where The Riffs surround The Rogues on the beach and they're just fucked.

Jimmy: The first thing they said, "Well, we don't want any trouble, man."

Todd: ...after beating someone up.

Jimmy: Exactly. My friend Happy just ran over and clocked one right in the fuckin' face.

Scott: I forgot about that.

Jimmy: And the dude he hit didn't wanna do anything about it. Me and my friend Matt went to go get bats. We came back and they were gone, so I probably missed prison that day. That was when we learned how strong and cohesive the scene could be in the neighborhoods. But, at the same time, it also showed that people can't come from some place outside and start fucking around.

Dale: Can I share a story?

Todd: Yeah, you bet.

Dale: So there's this cop in La Mirada, Officer Larson. He kind of looked like Rob Halford, but not as cool and skinnier. I love Rob Halford. He's the man. Larson would

always try to schmooze with the kids. He was the outside campus officer through Norwalk/La Mirada PD. He'd always be around the school. "Hey, you kids smoke the pot?" Sideways cap.

Jimmy: "Do you guys blow tea?"

Dale: There's a rager in my buddy Mike's backyard. This band that I ended up playing drums in, is going off. All of a sudden, the flashing from the street. Gear comes off. Cops come in. One of the cops is Officer Larson. Doesn't say a word. He just walks up, doing the nods with the shoulders. He picks up my friend Bill's guitar. Throws it on, full uniform. Starts playing "For What's It's Worth" by Buffalo Springfield and then he starts singing it. Of all songs.

Everyone's trying to hide their 12ers in the ivy. The other two officers finally walk in. "C'mon, we're breaking this shit up." He takes the guitar off, hands it to Billy. He did the "wrap-it-up" [swirls index finger] signal. "You've got to shut this down." So if it wasn't him, it could have went the other way. Last I heard some years back, Officer Larson got caught up in a go-go powder deal gone awry and got busted down to a low-level prison gig.

Todd: How did you three come together as La Tuya? You three have known each other for a long time and have played in so many bands over the years.

Dale: So after Charm Machine and Hollywood Hate went on indefinite hiatus, Scott and Jimmy were talking about doing a band. Were you guys messing around with a drum machine?

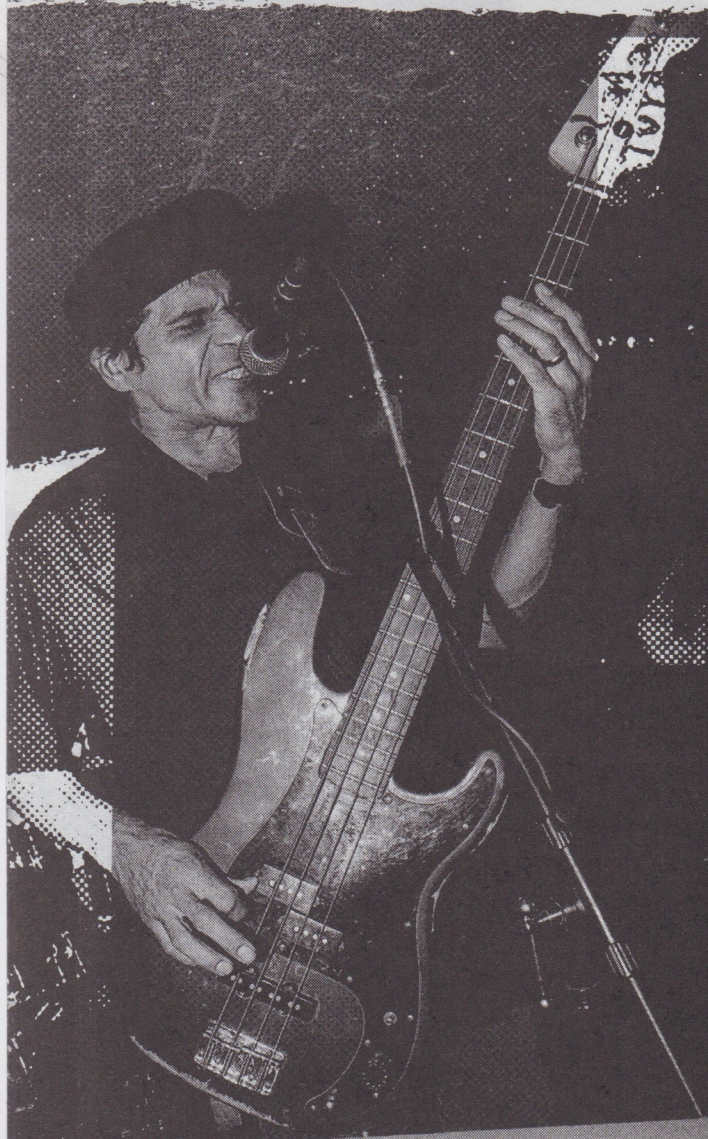
Jimmy: No, no, no.

Scott: [Vocalizes drum machine beats.] That's the beauty of La Tuya. We didn't write a bunch of laws, but I kept joking around that we did the opposite of what we did in every other band before. It's worked. We've put out a CD. It was funny how we were meticulous in planning this band.

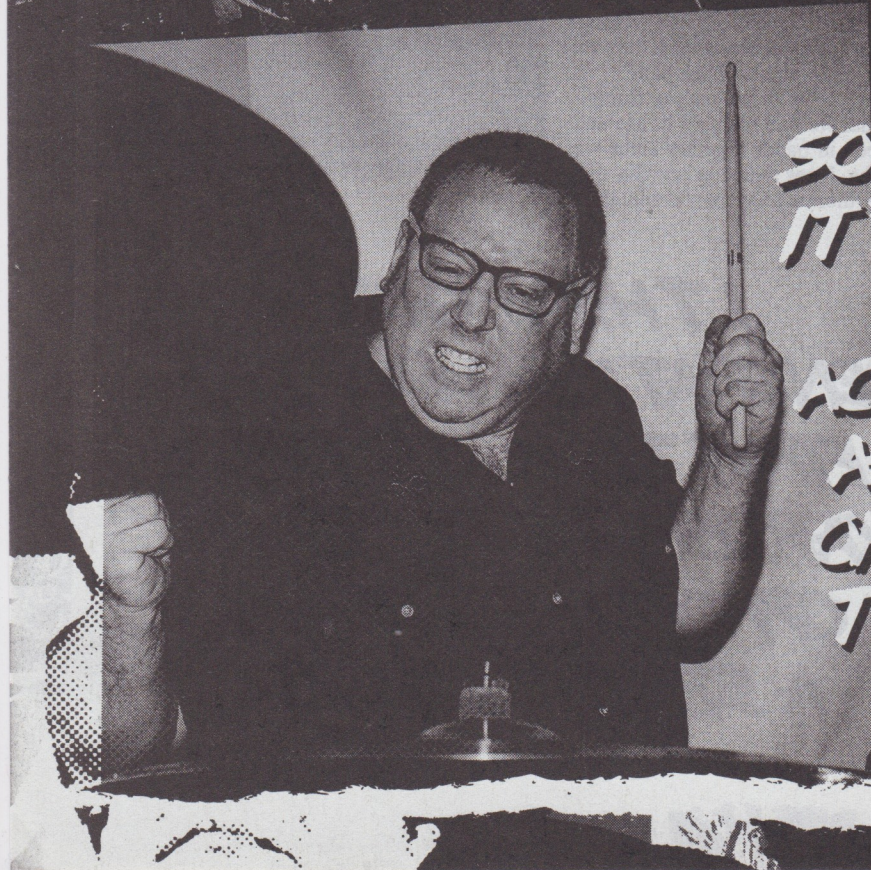
Jimmy: None of it came out to fruition in the way that we had planned it. Me and Scott had been in bands together since we started playing. I was realizing one day that me and him—there are tons of recordings of



**I THINK OUR
GENERATION WAS THE
FIRST TO MAKE THE
YARDS THE FOCUS AS
OPPOSED TO BEING
A SPRINGBOARD.**



OLD HC DUDE



**SOMEONE THOUGHT
IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA
TO LIGHT AN
ACETYLENE TANK OFF
AND BLOW UP PART
OF THE SIDEWALK ON
THE BLOCK BEHIND
OUR HOUSE.**

us—but we'd never done an actual recording where we go into a studio. We're getting older. I wanted to see if Randy wanted to be in it. He's like, "Fuck Randy. Randy won't play. I'll be in the band."

Scott: Randy's my twin brother. He's a drummer. Holy shit. We [motioning to Dale] had planned it out months in advance. "We're going to get together on Easter Sunday 2016" because we had a free day on the calendar.

Jimmy: And we'd been fucking around for a year before, with Ralo from F.C.D.N. Tormentor on drums.

Scott: Fuck, when I first played with Dale, I felt the power and the rhythm. The way he makes the drums sing. I was hooked at our first rehearsal. "This is it."

Jimmy: We looked at each other: "This works." We made these rules. "If we're going to do covers, we're only going to do Mexican songs, but punk rock versions." That didn't last. We've branched off into more obscure punk rock songs. "Hot Stumps" by The Controllers. "Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance to the Radio" by Masters Of The Obvious. The only rule we've really adhered to is trying to push out a little bit and do things that we're not comfortable with. I've never wanted to be a singer.

Scott: Goddamn, you surprise me Jimmy. You grew as a musician. All the best vocal songs on the record, that's Jimmy singing. Your ear for melody is strong.

Jimmy: I'm going to get all Cowardly Lion. [Visibly blushes]

Dale: When something works, it works. It's like when you go out with somebody, the first few dates. With the first rehearsal, "there's something good here."

Scott: When we did the Razorcake Family Quinceañera here, for the fifteen-year celebration of the magazine, we brought in my friends who are a mariachi and we did something we'd never done before and it fucking worked. We haven't done it since.

Todd: With La Victoria. That was awesome.

Jimmy: Scott worked with them to get the songs together, but we hadn't practiced with them.

Todd: That's hard to believe because it was seamless.

Dale: People were tripping hard. Ty Stranglehold said, "It's like the Dropkick Murphys, but it's Mexican. It's fucking rad!"

Jimmy: It's all just fallen together and into place. It's fun. That's the most important thing. We're not trying to reach some marketing goal or some career thing. We're going out there and having fun.

Dale: We do it for us.

Todd: Jimmy and Scott, do you ever look back at Dale, look at his pinkness, and go, "He's got one more song in him"?

Dale: You fucking racist, Todd.

Todd: You get so pink. I say this with much love. You look like the world's angriest gopher back there. [laughter]

Jimmy: No, but there are times I do look back at him and he's like, "Fuck, I'm tired." I look at him, "Okay, the thrash song now!"

Dale: Second, third, fourth wind.

Scott: I pretend that I don't feel the same way. We're almost fifty years old, Dale and I. I do feel sorry for him sometimes.

Jimmy: We're not a band that stands there—well, I stand there—but if you've ever seen Scott and Dale; Scott's all over the place. It's like watching the Circle Jerks in '81. He's just bouncing off the fucking walls.

Scott: I can't *not* do it. I don't mean to go out and do it, but the music propels me.

Dale: When it's good, you forget you're tired.

Jimmy: The next day, you can't fucking get up.

Dale: Eight hundred milligrams of ibuprofen. You find the time to practice and play. Your heart finds the time to love what you're doing.

I'M A CHICANO. I'M A PUNK ROCKER. I'M NOT A "CHICANO PUNK."

Until you get home and you're nodding off into your sandwich.

Todd: With that in mind, what are your day jobs and how do they feed into how you approach being musicians at this age?

Jimmy: I've often said, "I do what I do so I can do what I do." I work in a union. That goes towards the punk politics of things where I'm not working for The Man. It's helping other artists try to make sure that they get paid. That's what I do during the day. I use that to be able to not have to worry about surviving. It's a very hard motherfucking gig of trying to survive as a working artist.

Scott: I did music professionally 'til I was forty. To be a full-time musician, you have to hustle. You have to teach, you gotta play shitty gigs. You gotta play wedding gigs. I found a niche in theater, as a music director for plays—I don't have a fucking degree. The job of music director is to oversee all the musical components. It started about '95 with L.A. Teatro.

I had a little studio. You do enough to pay the rent. But at age forty—I'm forty-seven now—I had a daughter. I took five years off, and that was my plan. But things changed a couple years ago. My daughter, unfortunately, has this disease and now I'm taking care of her. So that's what I do. My first job off from being a musician was being a mom. I'm a caretaker for my daughter, who, like all of us, is just passing through here, but she's not going to be on this plane of existence for many more years.

Jimmy: Making the most of the time she has. And that's his job. A better job than I think anybody else is going to come up with.

Dale: Seriously.

Scott: Exactly. That's what I do now.

Todd: Dale, you had a late career change.

Dale: I was a route driver for one of the oldest West Coast vending companies.

Todd: Which you got almost out of high school.

Dale: I started in '90. I was twenty years old. You know you see banks of vending machines, like coffee machines, snack machines, food machines, ice cream machines? I used to fill those all day. MAB Services—which is no longer around—started with two coffee

machines in downtown L.A. and grew it from there. How it did it is beyond me. Over a third of our business was the UPS hubs, where they package and sort. We had a lot of the Cal State universities. It was a lot of lifting—half of it was bottles and cans. It was almost sixteen straight years of that.

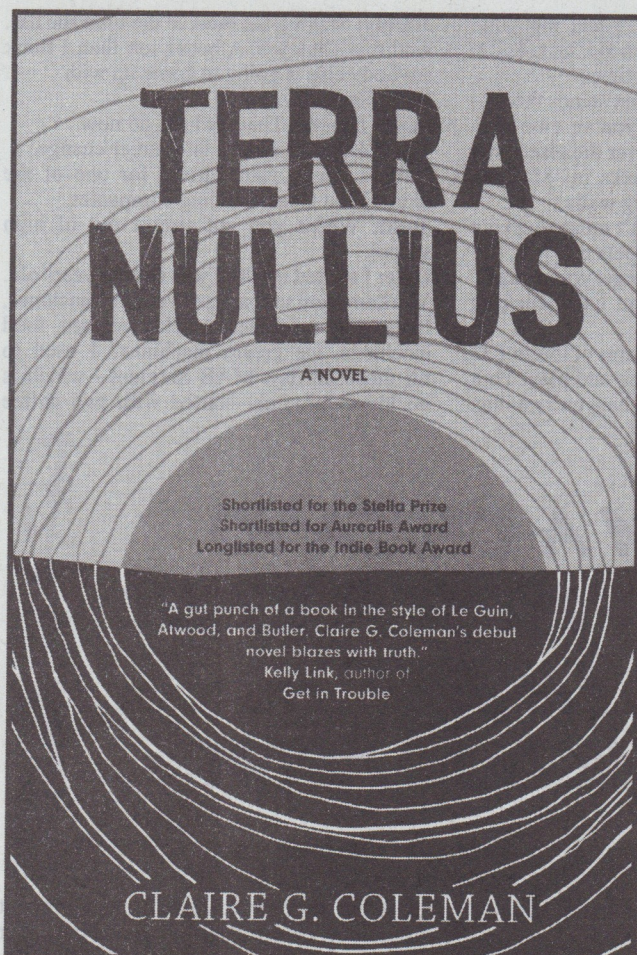
It's a labor of love. You better love what band you're playing in. I was up at three, work at four, usually home by noon. Those Friday night gigs or at Bar Deluxe in Hollywood during the week. Some of those nights—"I gotta go home and throw on my uniform." Showing up to work smelling like a sweaty bar and cigarettes.

In 2005, I had severance checks in my hands. I hit up the community workers center in Glendale. I wanted to get into either radiology or pharmacy. They were going to pay for my school and I get to keep my unemployment, if I followed through, until I finished my internship. I got in at a trade college and got my pharmacy tech license. I got my foot in the door at one of the biggest West Coast HMOs. It's been a blessing. I've been there almost twelve years now. So if you want dope... ask somebody else, because it's not worth my license, motherfucker.

Todd: You mentioned it briefly before, Ollin being Nahuatl.

Scott: It is.

Todd: What are some of the influences for the lyrics and your approach in La Tuya? Over the years, Jimmy and I have had long talks about heritage, about Aztlán, the underpinnings of a cultural representation that's in East L.A.



When I saw the squalor they lived in, without any of the conveniences that make our lives better, dirty and seemingly incapable of being clean, I was horrified. When I discovered they had intelligence I was surprised. When I was told their souls had not been saved I resolved to do something about it.

THE REVEREND MOTHER MARY SANTESLOSH

JACKY WAS RUNNING. There was no thought in his head, only an intense drive to run. There was no sense he was getting anywhere, no plan, no destination, no future. All he had was a sense of what was behind, what he was running from. Jacky was running. The heave of his breath, the hammering of his heart were the only sounds in his world. Through the film of tears and stinging, running sweat in his eyes there was nothing to see, only a grey, green, brown blur of woodland rushing past. Jacky was running. Other days he had felt joy at the speed, at the staccato rhythm of his feet, but not today. There was no space in his life for something as abstract – as useless – as joy. Only a sense of urgency remained. Jacky was running.

STATE VIOLENCE

Wikipedia: Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning “nobody’s land”, and is a principle sometimes used in international law to describe territory that may be acquired by a state’s occupation of it.

★ “Coleman stuns with this imaginative, astounding debut about colonization. . . . Coleman universalizes the experiences of invaded indigenous populations in a way that has seldom been achieved. Artfully combining elements of literary, historical, and speculative fiction, this allegorical novel is surprising and unforgettable.”

— *Publishers Weekly* (Starred Review)

“A speculative sci-fi struggle meaningfully grounded in Coleman’s own Indigenous culture, *Terra Nullius* offers something new — a skilfully constructed pastiche of colonisation, resistance and apocalyptic chaos with parallels that sit unsettlingly close to home.”

— *Big Issue Australia*

An incendiary, timely debut from an essential Australian Aboriginal writer, Claire G. Coleman.



Available from all good independent bookshops, smallbeerpress.com, & as DRM-free ebooks from our indie ebooksite weightlessbooks.com & by cash/check from Small Beer Press, 150 Pleasant St., #306, Easthampton, MA 01027.

How does La Tuya forward that and what are the topics you're addressing?

Jimmy: We're not setting ourselves up as a "Chicano band" in that sense. We're a band with a bunch of Chicanos in it. We're speaking more towards our sense of existence as opposed to it being this specific platform—it's who we are, so it's a manifestation of us as people, lyrically and conceptually. It's not prefabricated in that sense, where we're built around a specific message, like Los Illegals were, for example.

Todd: How do you express it? If someone's looking at your CD or reading your lyrics, give them some breadcrumbs.

Jimmy: The front cover is a picture of the Statue of Liberty with its fist up, which is the "Chicano Power" fist. Instead of holding whatever it is she's holding in real life, she's holding a copy of Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America*. "Hecho en Aztlán" is written in big letters on the CD itself. I think of it being subtle, but I guess it's not.

Scott: There's a lyric in "Nothing Times Two," talking about how much I've fucked up and where I'm stuck in life. I'm talking about changing things and I say, "Maybe I'll shave my head and be a gangster fool / Make you all fear and respect me / But running from cops and bullets is hard work / I'll probably suck at that, too."

Jimmy: And "Tribes" is along the same line. It's about the divisions we put up as people. Bigots only hang out with bigots. Punks only hang out with punks. The fallacy of all of that. At the same time, it's book-ended with the whole idea of being young, thinking that you're running out of time, and all the stupid shit you do as kids. Then at the end of the song, you realize that you've built this world and you've found that you didn't learn anything.

Scott: I take Jimmy's song as a love/hate letter to the Chicano movement. It's about this nationalism. It's an essential part of our existence.

Jimmy: Our makeup, who we are.

Scott: But, it's also something we rise above. Any sort of nationalism, you learn, is fucking bullshit. It gets in the way of things. You go through a phase where Aztlán is important to you, but then you realize, so is your family, your bandmates, the people around you, people in your neighborhood.

Jimmy: Which is not to say that we aren't aware of our history, or that we're not down with the perpetual struggle against the U.S.'s treatment of our people on both American continents. We continue to put in work in that regard. It's reflected in our lyrics and our politics. We're just not so myopic that we can't see that there's more that we have in common with others than there are differences. This talk about pride—Chicano pride, this pride, that pride—I've never really thought of it in terms of being proud because I didn't do anything. I was born with a recessive gene. I come to it from a place of gratitude. I'm grateful for being Chicano. I consider myself very lucky. It's a very beautiful culture. It's built from two

other very beautiful cultures, but it's one of many beautiful cultures. Because of that appreciation of my own culture, I've learned to be able to appreciate the beauty in other cultures, as opposed to being so far with my head up my own ass that I'm missing all the beauty in other things.

Scott: I agree with that.

Jimmy: La Tuya's a manifestation of three people—all three of us are ultimately barrio kids. It's our truth. It's who we are, but it's not an affectation in the sense that I'm going to make this bold statement about being Chicano. I'm a Chicano. I'm a punk rocker. I'm not a "Chicano punk."

Todd: You don't need an adjective before punk.

Jimmy: I'm a punk and, for me, that's an all-encompassing term. In that regard, I'm very old school in that frame of mind. For me, that's what allowed us to feel comfortable finding the commonalities with, say, the Vietnamese kids, the Chinese kids, or the white kids who we hung out with. Yeah, we fucked with each other all the time. Yet, we were all punks. But I think that this band is a manifestation in that sense. We go up on stage. We play. Sometimes we're doing shit in Spanglish, Spanish, and English. It's just speaking that truth of where we're coming from and where we've been. Hopefully it portends to where we're going.

Dale: Anyone who really gets into punk rock and starts examining the environment, you can tell who's lived in a bubble and really hasn't experienced it. You run into congregations of black kids or Puerto Rican kids who are heavy duty into it, more hardcore into it than some of the kids who lived around Southern California—more predominantly white neighborhoods. Like Jimmy said, punk doesn't have a color.

Jimmy: We got into it very young. It was a different world for us, especially in East L.A. There were few of us, so you glommed onto the people who you met. You had to find this cohesiveness because there was strength in numbers. You learned to acclimate in that regard. Some of those people—their heads weren't screwed on too tight. We've said it before. You don't get into punk rock back then because you're well-adjusted.

Dale: Joey Ramone had said in interview after interview that being in a band is some of the best self-psychotherapy that has ever existed. There's only two things that matter, being in a band: what you do in a recording studio and on stage. Everything else, yeah, I'm making the jacking off symbol with both my hands right now. [laughter] It's fucking hot air.

Todd: Let's talk about our current political situation.

Jimmy: Okay. What part would you like to discuss? The fact that the Dickhead-in-Chief was celebrating genocide yesterday?

Todd: I'm referring to "Bow to the Cheeto King," one of your songs. In all seriousness, what's the largest problem we're facing with this guy?

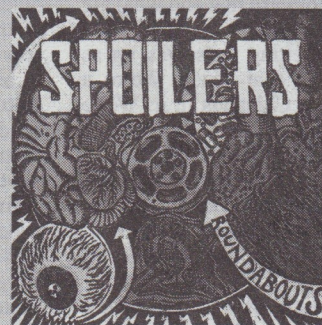
Jimmy: I think he, himself, is the largest problem that we're facing. He's a shit show



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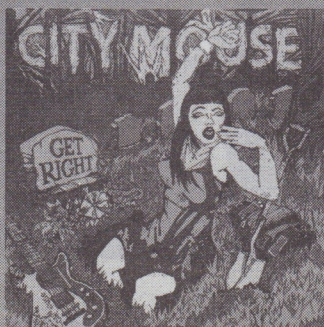
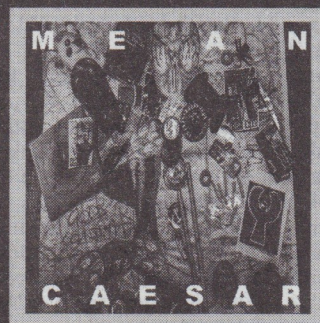
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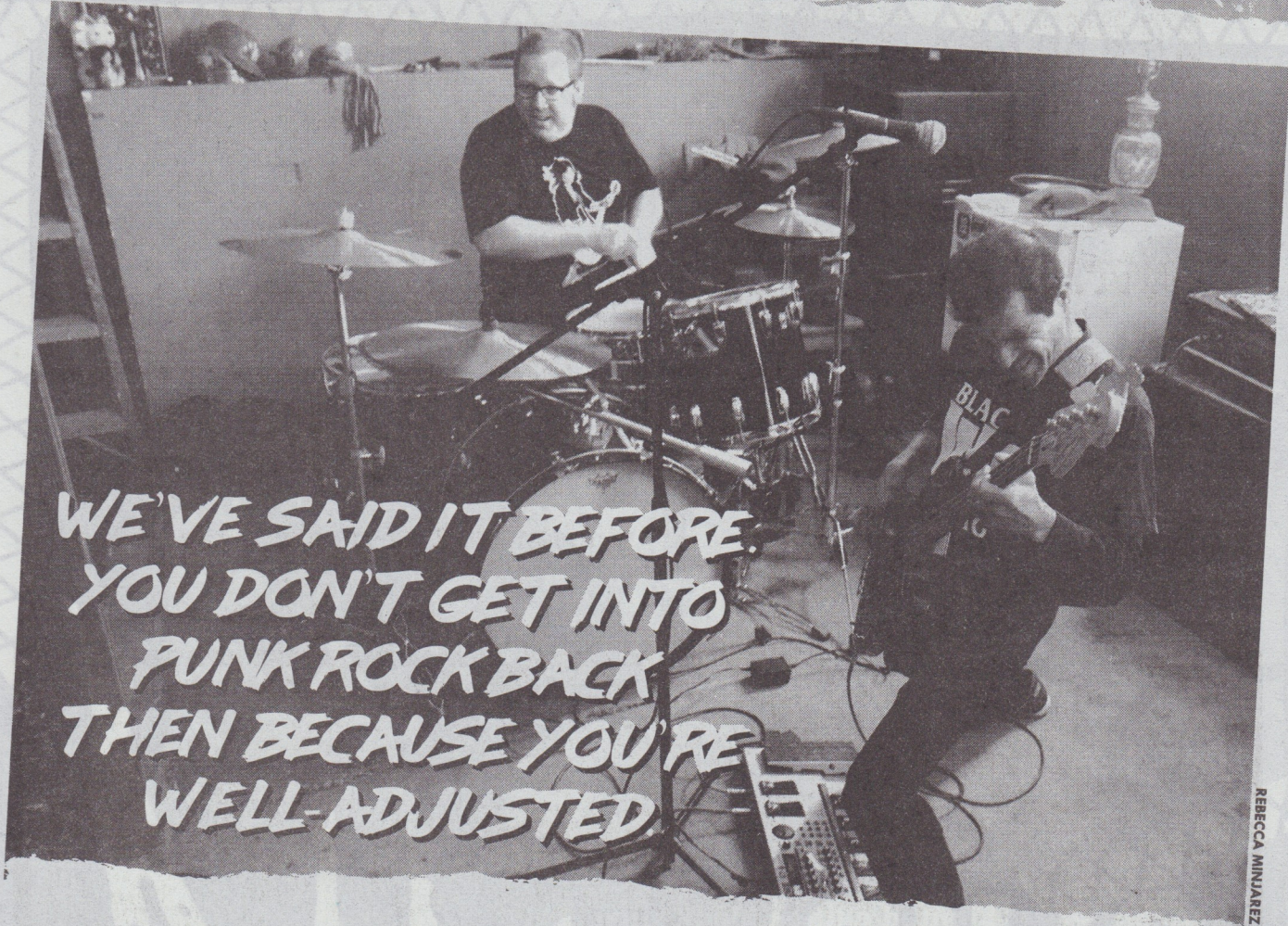
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of so many other things that meld into this huge pile of orange crap. He's a pathological liar. He's a sociopath.

Dale: I don't like how he enables shitheads who think like him to think it's okay to be very vocal about being a shithead.

Todd: Since he hasn't been ousted, people gravitate and reorient towards power.

Jimmy: It's becoming normalized. Ousting him could theoretically create a bigger problem. He's insulated himself in such a way that choice number two is even worse and choice number three is worse than the previous two. Unfortunately, we're in a situation of this unholy trinity, where you've got him, a Congress that is using him as a rubber stamp, and you've got a situation with the Supreme Court, which is going to make it all possible if it's ever challenged. It's a very scary time. It's very unnerving, not just as citizens, but specifically for people of color, women, people with fluid gender. He's the fucking trifecta of fucked-ness.

Todd: With that in mind, as musicians, how do you deal with that?

Jimmy: We make fun of him.

Dale: Exercise our right to say whatever the fuck we want about him or his Everlasting Gobstopper of three-layered shit that he's part of.

Jimmy: And utilizing skills we learned in Butt Acne—that band's whole purpose was to offend people—tapping into that and adding the lyrical content to parody him while using that grain of truth to point out what a shitbag he is.

Todd: There's going to be a long tail on this. What he's dismantling now has implications for decades and decades.

Scott: Do you think he'll win another term?

Jimmy: I don't think that's outside the realm of possibility.

Todd: Like it or not, it's a heavyweight fight between a Republican and Democrat.

Jimmy: And at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter because the same owners own the Republicans and Democrats.

Todd: Also the Democrats don't have a unified front behind somebody right now. If you don't have a number one contender, that's a scary place to be.

Jimmy: Ultimately, some of the things he's responsible for, I think were foregone conclusions regardless of who was going to end up in power. The same corporations that own him, own the other side.

Scott: Right now, it's political season. On TV they're running a bunch of commercials for governor. Antonio Villaraigosa came

from our neighborhood, but he is a fuckin' nothing.

Jimmy: He sold out the unions.

Scott: That's the price of us being in the game. A politician is telling you that they're a piece of shit wearing a suit. So, that's what we know.

Dale: (referencing the "Vote Quimby" ad in an episode of *The Simpsons*) "Villaraigosa: if you were running for mayor, he'd vote for you." [laughter]



CLUB

"Have you been to sCUM?"

is the question I've been asked consistently since their second anniversary show by hermanx, who have yet to take in sCUM in all of its queer, POC glory. Daryl and I got a chance to have a great conversation with sCUM's creators Rudy Bleu and Hex-Ray to talk about everything from zine making, party life, and the best queer, POC monthly party nestled in our own barrio of East Los.

A party where all the rumors you've heard are true and then some. A dark, sweaty nightclub playing the best in everything, while all the beautiful ones—because everyone here is *dahling*—dance the night away in the best DIY street couture. The go-go lovelies—especially their very own resident dancer, Taco—make you stop dead in your tracks, as they mesmerize you with their interpretive dance movements. Top resident DJs and loved music icons mix it up. And don't forget the floor show right at the stroke of the midnight hour—hosted by the hostess with the most ass—Lady Forbidden, welcoming local, fresh talent as well as seasoned queens, like the beauties on RuPaul's *Drag Race*. Remember: If you dare come here, respect the neighborhood and the sCUM familia. Tip your bartenders, the talent, and be prepared to sweat your makeup and clothes off (with consent).

INTERVIEW BY EVER VELASQUEZ AND DARYL GUSSIN
INTRODUCTION BY EVER VELASQUEZ

PHOTOS BY RUDY BLEU, AMINA CRUZ, MARIN, CHINO RODRIGUEZ,
AND GERARDO DAVID TORRES SALAS

LAYOUT BY ERIC BASKAUSKAS

Ever: So what brought you two together to create the best monthly event in the neighborhood? [laughs]

Ray: The infamous story goes...

Daryl: We want as many juicy details as possible.

Ray: I had met Rudy online through zine making. We chatted for awhile before we got together. He was doing another party called Mixtape at Akbar. He invited me out to come play music and I had never DJ'd before. We had this really great night and everyone was like, "When's the next one?" But it was a one-time thing. We thought we should start something because everyone was asking for more. Within the next month we started sCUM and it was really cool.

Rudy: [laughs] The way he usually tells this story is that Ray DM'd me on Instagram and he had just made a zine, which was *NochedeJotiar*, and he asked if he could mail it to me, 'cause he had heard about me. Me and a couple members of Maricón Collective were talking about it, because it was a parallel to what we were doing. When he hit me up, I was like, "Sure, mail it to me." And he was like, "I really wanna know what you think of it." But I never replied. [laughs]

Ever: Ghost!

Rudy: I was just being very careful with who I was communicating with at the time. Then Ray hit me up again and was like, "Hey, you never replied." And I was like, "Oh my god, yeah, we should get together." That's when

Ray mentioned to me that he had always wanted to do a night at Chico. And I thought that was funny because I was DJing someone else's club at Chico. I was doing it because it was a friend; it was more their night. And so when Ray mentioned that, I was like, "Oh my god, I've always wanted to do something there, too." So I asked the bar manager and he was like, "I don't think it's going to work." [laughs]

Ever: Look at him now.

Daryl: What idea did you propose? And also, explain what Chico is the rest of the month.

Ray: Chico used to be the same thing every day. It's very hood, hip hop, paisa. Stuff like that.

Rudy: It's a neighborhood gay bar and since it's on the border of East L.A./Montebello, it caters to a Latinx audience. The thing, too, is that we were going to Chico. Ray lives down the street. I grew up down the street.

Ray: There were just so many people from the neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods that go there and are alternative, but we just go there because it's the neighborhood gay bar. For anything out of the ordinary, we would have to go far and it's just like, "Why can't we bring something back home?"

Ever: For those that haven't been to sCUM, or don't know what sCUM is, what would be the best way to describe it?

Rudy: When people ask, who aren't aware of the neighborhood or us, I just say it's a POC,

queer, punk night that's open to everyone. But it's definitely heavily Latinx.

Ray: No Top Forty. Everything is pretty out there and wild.

Daryl: Maybe some Top Forty from 1987.

Rudy: To answer your question about how I proposed the night. I told Alex the bar manager it was going to be a new wave night where we play The Smiths, Depeche Mode, and he was still like, "I don't think people will come." And I was like, "What do you mean? There are so many kids in the neighborhood that are into that." I went back to Alex and I was like, "It would mean a lot to us and to the people of this neighborhood." Because more than half the people who went to Mixtape at Akbar were from Montebello, Whittier, East L.A., Pico Rivera.

Ever: I was coming when I was living in Perris, California. [laughs]

Rudy: Yeah! So that's when I was like, "This is for people in the San Gabriel Valley, the 909." So Alex was like, "Okay, I'll let you guys try it."

Ray: The first one was interesting because all the Chico regulars were there before we even got there. And when we changed the music up, everyone was like, "Oh, what the hell is happening?" They were coming to the DJ booth and asking, "Do you have anything else? Madonna?" [laughs] And we were like, "No, this is something new we're trying out."

Rudy: People were leaving and complaining to the bartender.

Ray: Talking shit at 7-Eleven down the street. [laughs]

Rudy: Our friend just happened to be at 7-Eleven—getting pregaming drinks or whatever—and they heard these guys talking about how the music that was going on at Chico was horrible.

Daryl: Were you just playing punk music?

Rudy: Usually we'll play a lot of punk-heavy stuff in the beginning. I just remember Alex came into the DJ booth and was like, "All right, this is cool." And he looked nervous. And also our flyer was very provocative, which I don't think they were used to. It was a dick dripping the word "scum." [laughs]

Ray: It was made by Martin. So it was just really out there.

Rudy: And that's what we wanted: something in your face and vulgar, but kinda punk. And at some point in the night it started getting crowded, people started dancing, and the drag performances were all great.

Ray: I think that was the first time Alex ever experienced a mosh pit. Especially inside of Chico. He was like, "Uhh, are people going to die?" [laughs]

Rudy: And towards the end of the night he came to the booth and was like, "This worked. If you ever want to try it again..." And we were like, "We'll take the last Friday of every month."

Daryl: So tight.

Ever: Can you each tell me about how your past and present ventures in the nightlife have helped with your success of sCUM?

Ray: I've always been a part of the nightlife in the underground scene. That's just where I

found my home. So I started off going to gigs, and at the time it was very macho, bro, East L.A. or South L.A. punk scene. And as time passed, I just started to be like, "What the hell? Everyone is in relationships and I'm just right here, this little gay boy that people are cool with but that's about it." I got tired of that and ventured out into the party scene, which was introduced to me by Lady Forbidden. We went to high school together and she was like, "Have you ever been to a T party?" And I was like, "What the hell is that?"

Ever: Can you explain what a T party is?

Ray: A T party is like a flyer party, but it's 100% gay and lesbian or whatever. It's always in Compton [laughs] in a backyard, and it's drag performers and young gay people and partying. It's really hard to even imagine without being there, because it's really frickin' crazy. There're people of all ages and it's frickin' cool.

Rudy: Ray and I are ten years apart, so for me T parties were more a mid-to-late '90s thing and what I saw at T parties is that every different type of gay kid was there. Queens, and there were cliques... [laughs]

Ray: Party kids. And houses.

Ever: True.

Rudy: But I went to T parties all over. Compton, Boyle Heights, Montebello, Whittier—it was a place to feel like you belonged. And even though I was a punk, well, I'm a punk now, but at that time my appearance was very punk. [laughs] But I hung out with a bunch of club kids. Going to Arena and stuff like that. But this was different because you were in someone's backyard.

Ray: It's crazy because T parties are honestly like punk shows. Everyone shows up, a drag queen performs, and it gives you that same satisfaction as watching a band play. Everyone is screaming and it's just really cool.

Ever: I think most recently when you had the anniversary party at the Echoplex, you could see it. People who weren't used to the environment—like straight kids who showed up—once Lady Forbidden came out and the first band hit, they were just like, "I love this! Where is Club sCUM?"

Ray: Honestly, behind it all, we wanted sCUM to be something like Latinx, POC, punk, queer, everything wrapped into one. Because, I for one, have never been to something else like that before.

Ever: Me neither.

Ray: Even if you're gay, it's like, "You can't be punk because it's not the aesthetic," or whatever.

Rudy: For me, in the '90s, I really got into queercore and riot grrrl and stuff like that. But it was very white. So when I went to shows, there were so many white people and then you'd see a couple brown kids and be like, "Oh my god, where do you live?" [laughs]

Ever: I would never see any. I would be the one and then some girls would try to fight me and I'd be like, "Let's go." Then they wouldn't want to fight me. [laughs] "Okay, I'm just going to stand here by myself."

Rudy: I got offered to DJ for the first time when I was twenty at the Gauntlet, now the

Eagle. I lied and said I was twenty-one. And I also lied and said I knew how to DJ. [laughs] Which I totally didn't.

Daryl: Game on.

Ever: But that's how you do it. I lied about my age so I could have a show on college radio.

Rudy: People always told me I made good mixtapes, so I was like, "Sure I can DJ." So I showed up at the Eagle and I was like, "Okay, so last time the mixer was totally different than this one. What do you do?" And then I just started DJing a lot and eventually I had my own night which was called Spunk and it was at a bar called The Parlor. It was a queer punk thing and we would have a band play every so often.

Daryl: Where was The Parlor?

Rudy: It was on the border of East and West Hollywood on Santa Monica Blvd., near the Pleasure Chest. It was a weekly thing. It was the early 2000s, so electro-clash was a thing. It was punk and electro-clash and I had bands like The Haggard play. I did clubs for a while but then I stopped DJing for four or five years 'cause I was just kinda over the nightlife. But when I started DJing again for Mixtape, it was cool because it was a happy hour and I was home early. [laughs] But for me personally, my approach for sCUM was that this was going to be promoted as a POC, queer punk party and it was going to be in our neighborhood. The neighborhood that I grew up in and Ray is still living in. And that we were doing this for kids like us.

Ray: That's why it's become a community.

Daryl: There are levels of accessibility in L.A., venues that are totally overlooked. They don't think about how people have to travel to Hollywood.

Rudy: That's the other thing. Sometimes people complain to us that it's in Montebello and that's "so far." And it's like, if you feel Montebello is too far for you, think about those who are like, "Oh my god, it's right down the street from my house!" That's what it's there for. There are so many other nights that exist. For me, if you're going to complain about the distance, then maybe it's not for you. [laughs]

Rudy: It's a free party! You know.

Ray: Exactly. It happens once a month.

Ever: It's such a good vibe that even when it's crowded and super hot inside, you can have a good time outside talking with everybody.

Rudy: It's like two parties are happening.

Ray: I love that whole punk feel about it.

Ever: Definitely.

Daryl: What do you think about the people who suggest doing a sCUM show in West Hollywood?

Rudy: [groans] That just happened.

Ray: I just feel like it wouldn't work.

Rudy: Not even that, but no one asks people in West Hollywood to do their parties somewhere else. I would rather focus our time and energy doing sCUM in other Latinx neighborhoods in other cities. We've done San Francisco twice now. It's going to become quarterly next year.

Ray: Exactly. We're going to go to Mexico City. I prefer to tend to a crowd or community



MARIN

RUDY BLEU

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MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

like that, versus West Hollywood where the aesthetic and the values of everything are different. You go there and people bump into you and are clique-y.

Rudy: Also I just think punk is fetishized. When I did things in the past and I was interviewed by gay press—not all the time, but a large number of the time—they fetishized the men, or sometimes the boys, who were participating. Like, “this hot shirtless punk boy.” What does that have to do with this event?

Ray: That’s really true.

Rudy: And like Ray said, I don’t think it would work.

Ever: In regards to Daryl’s question, when that question was asked by the middle-aged man at a panel discussion we were all at, what personally bothered me was that he went as far to say that you were limiting yourself.

Rudy: Yeah!

Ever: I’m like, “Do you not know what they’re doing?” You are really creating something.

Rudy: That man was like, “Why are you afraid of success?” And the sad part of this is that at the end of the conversation he came up to me and was like, “You guys think that all this stuff you’re talking about is new. We had those same struggles back in the day.” And I said, “Isn’t *that* sad? That we are still battling the same stuff that you as a POC in the queer community were. And your answer to that is that we should do this in West Hollywood?”

Ever: I love that you guys are taking initiative and taking a stand. And doing your parties to your own standard and you’re not bending for anybody.

Ray: There’s a lot of work that goes on behind every night. We always try to look for new talent and try something different and be diverse. Have women and drag kings so it’s not so repetitive and it caters to everybody at the same time.

Ever: And it’s definitely seen. When I post about it, people that I know from other areas, like the Inland Empire or elsewhere, will be like, “Yo, was that really blankity-blank?” And I’m like, “Yo, check the flyer!” [laughs] If you don’t believe me that these people really put on for their city, they do!

Rudy: I think the thing, too, that has been really good for us is that we really keep a positive attitude about everything and whenever any kind of negativity has come our way, we just don’t have time for it. We’re just focusing on creating this space. And we always get asked, “What if someone were to do another party like sCUM?” sCUM isn’t 100% original. Parties have existed forever. Queer punk parties have existed forever. We’ve taken elements from here and there, and put in our own flavor into it. We try to support other people who are doing other events. And if they invite us to participate, if we can, we will.

Daryl: Didn’t one just happen last Friday? Mija?

Rudy: Oh yeah, that’s a new thing. My friend Inez and I are doing it. I’m helping in

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME ALEX EVER EXPERIENCED A MOSH PIT. ESPECIALLY INSIDE OF CHICO.

HE WAS LIKE,
“UUHH, ARE PEOPLE GOING TO DIE?”

[LAUGHS]

the transition. Chico isn’t used to having so many women. [laughs]

Ever: It’s also very necessary. I like that you are going into that. In the queer community, there’s that division.

Rudy: That’s a thing about sCUM too that I love. Gender representation is all over the map at sCUM. And it’s beautiful.

Ray: They’ve changed things at Chico. There’s different nights. It’s not just the same night anymore. And now with Mija being a lesbian night, it’s really cool to see change happening.

Ever: It’s definitely community. When I’m there, I’m there to see my family.

Ray: That’s important that everyone is able to show up and feel safe. Meet new people and network. I don’t feel like I would be able to do that anywhere else—at least not to that extent—the way this community has been built through sCUM.

Daryl: What do you think that says about the existing bars and venues in Los Angeles? What are they lacking that they aren’t fostering communities?

Rudy: One is that gay dating apps have killed queer bar culture. Bars are trying to survive and they rely on promoters and people to bring parties and crowds. But these are businesses, so most people are thinking about money.

Ever: They always are.

Rudy: And with sCUM, Ray and I didn’t think about money. Chico didn’t really think about money. And since there was no intention like that, it has been that natural, beautiful thing that has grown and flourished and we’re able to pay people. As the night has grown we’re trying to bring bigger talent and trying to not lose money ourselves, because sometimes we were going home with nothing. We’ve been paying people who had never even performed before. We gotta pay everyone out, like the dancers. It’s not about money, but we also have to be conscious that people need to be paid for their time. It takes time to put these looks together. [laughs]

Ray: Also, too, with sCUM it’s not about notoriety or status. It’s for the community. It’s not for me and Rudy to make a name for ourselves. It’s for creating this space for everyone who feels like they don’t have anywhere else to go and be themselves.

Rudy: Going back to your question, I think that sometimes bars, or spaces, don’t necessarily realize how important having a

sense of community and family is. Having a place that you can go to by yourself. Even Chico has their loyal customers, so they have their own little family. And now some of the Chico regulars stay for sCUM. [laughs]

Daryl: A bar shouldn’t just be a store where you go buy beer and sit there and drink it.

Ray: Giving us a chance to do this night meant us giving other people a chance to perform for the first time.

Rudy: There have been a lot of performers who never performed at sCUM and are now performing on the reg. And that’s awesome to us! And as far as bringing “talent” to sCUM, like people with notoriety, that decision always came with extensive conversations about what that would mean and who that would bring. But, at the same time, it’s like, “Why can’t these people DJ or perform at Chico?” for the people who don’t want to drive to Silver Lake or Hollywood.

Ray: Or can’t even afford it.

Rudy: Yeah, usually to see these people you have to pay.

Daryl: Are you talking about the drag performers or the DJs?

Ray and Rudy: Both!

Ray: JD Samson or Jessica Wild.

Ever: Or Beth Ditto.

Ray: These are icons that some people really look up to and admire so it’s really cool to have that for free for them.

Rudy: That is also just the thing about being in a community. I’ve been doing zines and stuff since the ’90s, so a lot of these people are old friends or acquaintances that saw that sCUM was happening. And I just said, “Hey, if you ever want to do sCUM, let me know.” And then one day we get a text being like, “I’m going to be in L.A.” [laughs]

Ray: It’s fun now that people get to see it on the Instagram from far away and they come from other states.

Rudy: Yeah, it’s crazy. When I was in Mexico in March at the Limp Wrist show, I met people who came up to me and they were like, “You do sCUM, right?” What?!! [laughs] They were like, “I wish I could go to sCUM.”

Ray: Well, now we’re going to them. [laughs]

Ever: This is the year that we manifest all of our dreams.

Ray: Absolutely.

Ever: With the growth of sCUM, where do you hope to go next? If you put it out there, it will happen.

Rudy: We're going to New York in September.

Ray: It's growing.

Rudy: And we got an invite for London next year, which we're trying to see if it's possible or not. But honestly, I would love for sCUM to travel to Spain. I tend to play a lot of Spanish new wave. And when I was there I was going to the gay bars and they were playing a lot of Spanish new wave and punk that you wouldn't hear at a gay bar here. And I was like, "Whoa!" And everyone was like, "Yeah, everyone knows this song."

Daryl: In Spain they call Spanish new wave... new wave. [laughter]

Rudy: We're going to Tijuana.

Ray: Honestly, anywhere sCUM is needed, we will come.

Ever: You sounded like a superhero right now. [laughter]

Rudy: That's the thing, invite us to do things.

Ray: We just had Donna Slash. She's from Washington, DC. And she's like, "You guys need to come to DC." There's a lot of people who feel displaced in their own communities who want something like sCUM.

Rudy: Who knows, maybe we could do a sCUM tour. [laughs] Put some of the girls in a van and then just drive around.

Ever: That would be amazing. You guys would be the queer Partridge Family.

Daryl: You're rolling into Bismarck on a Wednesday.

Ray: That'd be cool.

Daryl: I think this a really great and important statement, and I would just like to hear you elaborate on its meaning: "Queer anger is queer power."

Ray: In regards to Causa? (A hardcore punk band that Ray is in that has shirts with this statement on it.)

Daryl: Yeah, Causa and life.

Ray: I feel like queer anger is what brought us all together as a band. I posted a post on *NochedeJotiar* saying, "Who wants to start a band? This is what's needed, this is how we feel, and this is why we should start it." Here we are with all these different walks of life and experiences, and that stems from anger and frustration and the need for social change. For us, that queer anger brought us together and created this platform for us to extend our message out and relay with other people who feel the same way. And create this sense of resistance through music.

Rudy: I think that also, anger and frustration does create a lot of energy and power. Everything that I've ever really put a lot of effort into has been out of anger and frustration. And everything I do is queer, so... [laughter]

Ray: It brought me and Rudy together.

Rudy: There's lots of power in anger, in general.

Ever: Rudy, you've been in bands too. Why is that on the backburner? Or are you going to surprise us anytime soon?

Rudy: I do miss being in bands and I have jammed with people over the years. And there have been talks of my first band playing a show just for fun.

Ever: Yes!

RUDY BLEU



CHINO RODRIGUEZ



Rudy: It just hasn't happened yet. It's that thing where the young part of me is like, "Just do it!" And the old part is like, "You're too old, just get over it." I know, it's dumb.

Ever: You are magical!

Ray: I had originally asked Rudy, way back in the day, if he played guitar and if he wanted to be in a punk band. So he could have been in Causa.

Rudy: I'm just also very particular about the type of music I want to create.

Ever: What about all the zines you've made over the years—*Big Boy*, Maricón Collective—sCUM had a zine.

Rudy: My first zine that I printed was called *Scutter* and I did nine issues of that in the late '90s/early 2000s. And then I did collaboration zines with people. And then *Big Boy Vintage* was more just art made by big boys. I've released a couple personal zines over the last couple years, and those were stemming from a lot of writing that I was doing—taking a look back at my life. There's all this talk about archiving and I have boxes and chest of drawers full of stuff.

Daryl: Is there an archiving project you're working on?

Rudy: I was starting to but I realized that I need help. So if there are any library students out here... [laughter]

Daryl: What's the focus of the archive?

Rudy: That's the thing, it could go in so many ways because I have so many photos of live bands from shows in L.A. from the '90s to the mid-2000s. I have hundreds of zines, hundreds of flyers. I have posters.

Ray: Rudy has it all. [laughter]

Ever: Once in a while you'll bring something out of the stash and I'll be like, "Awww!"

Ray: I love it when he does that. It's like story time.

Rudy: I have the first *Razorcake*. I'm in the crowd in one of the photos in the Gossip interview. I have so many old things. And I realize now—twenty years into participating in Los Angeles culture, my own personal stuff—I kept journals and diaries, and I have every notebook that I used. When I go to museums and I see stuff like that, I'm like, maybe I shouldn't throw that stuff away.

Ray: When I started doing the *NochedeJotiar* zine, I wanted to create this Instagram page that exposed a lot of the things that I've witnessed or been a part of: the outrageous chola club kids and the queer punks and stuff like that. So I made these zines and put in all these images that I had saved throughout

the years from MySpace and they were all on this CD-R that I burned them on. And putting it up there, people thought it was cool 'cause they had never seen someone like Miss Martin, who's a three-hundred-pound, crazy, chola club kid drag queen. I made fifty of the first zine, was just like, "Who wants a zine? They're free, I'll mail it to you." The response was crazy. People wanted to know where these parties happen and how are you able to have this.

Ever: Maricón Collective was so beautiful and necessary. Collective work is always hard. Even though Maricón Collective is no longer around, what did you go in with and what did you take out of the whole experience? Everything helps us learn and develop.

Rudy: Initially, it was supposed to be a DJ collective. The reason we did the "Maricón" shirts is that we were going to wear them every time we had a gig. It was a great experience. It felt very necessary at the time. When we went to San Francisco and did the party, it was one of the most beautiful evenings ever. I was basically crying because everyone was so receptive and needed it as well. And that's kind of the feeling I get at sCUM every month. Ray and I always text that night.

Ray: Yeah, till like four in the morning.

Rudy: And then we'll text the next day. I learned a lot from the collective—how to communicate, how to be transparent about things, how to stand my ground.

[laughter] It'll be three years this fall since the collective ended. But that was also part of meeting Ray as well.

Ray: I didn't know Rudy at first. I knew Michael and MP, and they were helping me with a lot of stuff that I was doing with *Noche* 'cause I didn't have any resources or materials. They were always like, "You would really get along with Rudy and Carlos. They're right up your alley." [laughter]

Ever: It says a lot that I would go to the parties and see guys I would see at other shows, who were straight guys, and they were having a good time.

Rudy: The goal with Maricón Collective was to go places that didn't necessarily want us there. And it brought a lot of different types of people together.

Ever: It was good without the macho bullshit. Going back to sCUM, you all have created something amazing and necessary as well. I personally haven't had a club that I go to that makes me feel as comfortable or safe at the

same level that also gives me entertainment like sCUM does. I've personally felt very uncomfortable going to other clubs because of how you're treated there.

Ray: When me and Rudy first started talking about sCUM, we knew we wanted sCUM to be something based from our own experiences. We wanted to create a space where no one is going to fuck with you. Everybody has each other's backs. We've both been in situations where it wasn't that. Creating our own night, we're like, "This is important, we have to make sure that people feel safe and everyone feels supported." People can show up and meet people. I've gone places where I didn't feel safe, or I was attacked, or made fun of because I was different. With sCUM we knew that that was important. And it's crazy because all this time has passed and we've only had one altercation. There was a fight once.

Rudy: They were ex-boyfriends.

Ever: Ohhh.

Rudy: That was drama that did not start at sCUM.

Daryl: Probably didn't end at sCUM either.

Ray: No, it didn't. [laughter]

Rudy: I was disappointed because it was just like, "Why? Really? Don't bring that here." We had one incident having to do with gender and the restrooms. And we talked to everyone involved. The person who felt misgendered, we talked to them, and so did Alex. And we assured them that we were going to take action. We released a statement the following day. We started putting up signs in the restroom that are now permanently there.

Daryl: What did the signs say?

Rudy: That there's no policing gender in these restrooms. If anyone feels unsafe, come talk to us at the DJ booth or go see the bartenders and we'll handle or assist in the situation. I just also feel like with sCUM there is a community, so whenever anything small has arisen, it gets taken care of. One time Marin told me that there was a guy taking pictures of two girls making out. And Marin saw someone blocking him and telling them that that wasn't cool. Then Marin got in his face too. [laughs] And they handled it. Marin didn't know who that other girl was, but they got together and told the guy that he couldn't do that. That's the thing. Everyone is out there for each other.

Ever: Even when you see new people, it's very welcoming.

Rudy: I always try to say hi to people.

Ray: Same.

with sCUM, Ray and I didn't think about money

AND SINCE THERE WAS NO INTENTION LIKE THAT,
IT HAS BEEN THAT NATURAL, BEAUTIFUL THING
THAT HAS GROWN AND FLOURISHED

WE ALSO HAVE TO BE CONSCIOUS THAT
PEOPLE NEED TO BE PAID FOR THEIR TIME

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Rudy: Especially when I go outside to the parking lot.

Ever: Even people who aren't from the neighborhood, who come in, are very respectful, which you don't see anywhere else. [laughter]

Ray: I think it comes from the neighborhood, that whole politics of the streets. A lot of us grew up in the streets and you know what it's like when you show up into someone else's home. Respect is a real big thing. I feel like a lot of people have been there and earned their time.

Rudy: I think when new people come, they just get excited. I can see them on the dance floor smiling. Just that this place exists. And that's awesome that we get to give them that feeling, but also everyone is trying to meet new friends and collaborate with someone on a new project—even when the pits have broken out, there have been some brutal ones. [laughter] But everyone's nice!

Ever: It's punk!

Rudy: There's people on the side who are watching to make sure that if someone falls they jump in and pick them up.

Ray: The whole staff at Chico is on board with all of this now. They brought in a transwoman as a bartender—little things that make a big difference for the people who come out.

Rudy: Earlier you had mentioned how in queer spaces it can be very male-centric, or female-centric. It's rare when it's a blend. But everyone respects each other's space. It was like a month or two ago there was a crazy girl pit. [laughter]

Ray: Women take over.

Rudy: And all the guys just kinda went to the side and respected that it was femme-heavy. I thought that was really beautiful.

Daryl: Do you remember what song was playing when that happened?

Ray: It was multiple songs. [laughter]

Ever: Didn't you start off with Hole?

Rudy: I think it started with Mika Miko, then Bratmobile, then Bikini Kill. I was like, "Oh, I'm just gonna keep going." And then it just started getting really crazy and I was like, "All right, let me reel it back in." Get them to dance and pogo instead of thrashing around.

Ray: That was really cool.

Ever: I love that you guys don't limit yourself. What do you have up your sleeves?

Rudy: The sCUM Two Year Anniversary show was much bigger than the One Year show, so right now we're really trying to top the Two Year. [laughs]

Daryl: Wow, the Hollywood Bowl or something?

Rudy: Not venue-wise...

Ray: How do we even top the Two Year? It was amazing, so we really gotta bring it.

Rudy: We have ideas of people, and bands, and stuff.

Daryl: I'm not really a fan of the Echoplex, and I had never really had a good time there. But that whole night just had this feeling of a clubhouse and people have having fun and

seeing friends everywhere I looked. And I just thought, "How did they do this to this venue?" [laughter]

Rudy: We honestly weren't planning to do the Echoplex at all, but we needed a venue that would be able to house a band like Limp Wrist. And that was the only place that was available. We didn't want to do a secret show, because that seemed like it would be fucked up to our loyal fan base.

Ray: And we also wanted it to be accessible to people under twenty-one.

Rudy: The first year was the Smell. It's all ages. I think the feeling that helped with

making it feel like it was a clubhouse was that it was a Sunday, early afternoon, the sCUM crowd. Having the queens there.

Ray: For a lot of people, that was something totally new—the punk kids who don't come to sCUM, who probably aren't even gay, and have never seen a drag queen perform before. It was really cool to collide these worlds together.

Rudy: It was also really fun to see a lot of the sCUM queens in the pit.

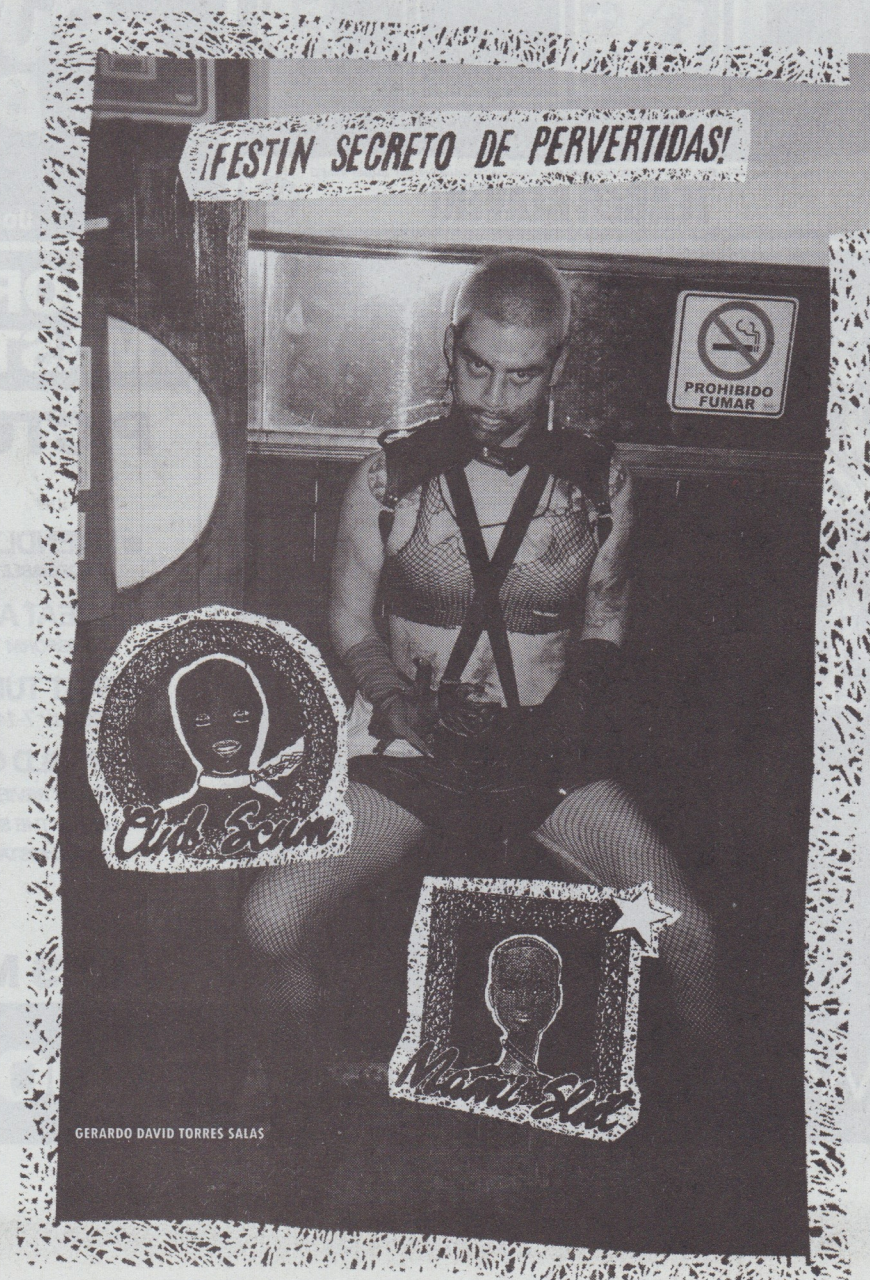
Ever: Pure energy.

Ray: And then La Victoria, that's a whole other element too. It was really special.

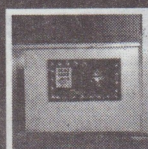
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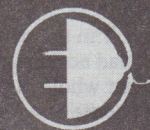


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Rudy: We asked the venue for tickets that we could sell to the sCUM crowd so people could get tickets through us, because we didn't just want it to sell out and it would just be a bunch of people who don't go to sCUM.

Ray: I can't believe it sold out. That's so cool.

Rudy: Yeah, so we're trying to work on the Three Year. There are plans to give back to the youth and do a day of workshops—using the elements of sCUM and the surroundings of sCUM. A lot of people do youth queer workshops, but this would be the grittier version of that. [laughter] And hopefully next year we'll have the sCUM 12" out.

Ray: Stay tuned.

Ever: What have been your top performances at sCUM?

Ray: I always go back to Travis.

Rudy: The first Travis performance.

Ray: Yeah, that was the ultimate. I had never seen Travis perform. Carlos was like, "You're not ready!"

Ever: Whoever can be most graphic, please explain the performance.

Ray: So this weird music starts...

Rudy: Wait, wait, wait. First of all, rewind. I've known Travis's work forever and I was like, "They are going to be fun, it's going to be great." So then that day, I was like, "Girl, how much time do you need to get ready?" And they were like, "Just let me know five minutes before because I need to go to the restroom really quick." And I thought they had to pee or something. So I let them know, and they came back out and they had a trench coat and a mask and a wig.

Ray: They were in these nine inch heels with this trench coat, a Michael Myers mask with makeup, and this natty wig. This weird, obscure music is playing.

Rudy: It was a noise piece that they did. Ray was in the crowd filming and I'm in the DJ booth.

Ray: I noticed that things started to get strange when they started to lay out puppy pads all over the floor. And the next thing you know they rip off the trench coat and they got a jock strap. Then they turn over and start shooting chocolate syrup out of their ass over a bowl of strawberries. [laughter]

Ray: I guess they had syrup in a condom that they squirted up their ass, and they pulled it out and started pouring chocolate all over themselves. Then they pick up that bowl of strawberries and try to feed them to the crowd. And everyone is like, "What the fuck?!?" It's all you could hear. My friend Tiffany had just graduated from CSU Dominguez Hills and was having her graduation celebration there and all her friends were like, "Oh my god, where did you bring us?"

Rudy: And one of my old co-workers performed that day and he brought a lot of my current coworkers to the show. And as it was all happening, I could see Alex behind the bar with this face of like, "What the fuck is happening?" Midway through the performance, I'm trying to get Ray's attention and flagging him to come back, thinking we're in trouble. And normally after the show Alex comes back to the booth and is like, "Oh my god, that was so great!" And that day he didn't come back for more than half an hour. Eventually he came back and he's like, "I get it, you know, performance art or whatever, [laughs] but we can't have people showing their buttholes, and shitting all over my new painted sign." [laughter]

Ray: He was worried that people who were recording and taking pictures were going to put it all over the internet. Because the sign said Chico with shit all over it.

Rudy: It wasn't real shit.

Ray: Right, yeah. But nobody did.

Rudy: The thing is, too, a bar like Chico, they're a smaller bar so the repercussions of a small thing can hurt them. Now everyone knows: don't show your butthole. Even though we once had another queen, Alice

Cunt, who I told the rules and I knew she was going to break them.

Ever: Please tell us the rules.

Rudy: It's basically just don't show your butthole. If you're going to wear a jockstrap, it has to be a thong jockstrap. So then Alice Cunt is doing Gloria Trevi and comes out through the side, drinks a beer and spits it or something, and takes off her jacket. She's buck naked except she has duct tape all over her genitals. [laughter]

Ray: And then we had this other queen, TS Samantha, impromptu performance who just got naked.

Rudy: And we're just like, "Just don't bend over." Voodoo Nightshade's confetti wig was amazing. Sombra's crowd surfing without any sorta notice at all—she just laid down and the crowd caught her.

Ray: That was pretty cool to see a drag queen crowd surfing the entire premises of Chico.

Rudy: There's been so many. Pelon's first show at sCUM was so beautiful and amazing. There's been so many now.

Ray: They're all something to look forward to. Even when Phantom, who's a drag king, did Pennywise from *It*, it was so fucking good. Real hardcore special effects makeup and all the song choices were great.

Rudy: When Krutyna pulled her face off and she had the bloody face underneath. Everyone freaked out. [laughter]

Rudy: Mia Dosin's sCUM debut, she jumped off that high platform into a split.

Ray: She can do the splits like no other.

Ever: [at Ray] I've seen you, though.

Ray: Yeah, I do splits.

Rudy: She's done the splits during a Causa set. [laughter]

Ray: My inner Kathleen Hanna. It's just really cool to see anybody be brave enough to come and perform, show everybody what they got. Because, ultimately, everybody loves to see a drag show, they look forward to it. Even one of my coworkers comes for the drag show. He doesn't like the music whatsoever. He's more of a WeHo type, but he's like, "These performances, they're so good!" He's used to seeing pop numbers, and here you have bitches going all out. Taking you to hell.

Ever: All right, Hello Kitty or Sailor Moon?

Rudy: Ah, that's rude. [laughter] Well, mine's going to be Hello Kitty, obviously.

Ray: I don't know, I like everything. Sailor Moon in drag? The people in Causa really like Sailor Moon and we've used a couple images. For Andrew's birthday, I got him that Sailor Moon dildo.

Ever: Anything else? What are you guys doing this weekend?

Rudy and Ray: sCUM! [laughter]

Ray: It's this Friday!



Despise You



ANTHONY MEHLHAFF

During the early '90s Despise You were a band whose members identities were shrouded in a thick haze of rumors and secrecy. Outlaws using a band as a cover? Powerviolence supergroup? The cat was out of the bag years later when the internet forever destroyed privacy as we once knew it. Chris Elder (of Pessimiser fanzine which would later also be the name of his record label), Phil Vera (Crom, Fresh American Lamb), and Rob Alaniz (Rise) came out of the shadows with new recruits Chris Dodge (Spazz, Slap A Ham Records) and Cynthia Nishi (Gasp) and gave the fans what they'd been

wanting: the live madness that is DY. The band marked their first show at Murderfest in 2007 and have gone on with countless more, along with a string of new recordings (the first being some demos later re-recorded for a split with Agoraphobic Nosebleed in 2011). The band has since settled in with their core members of Chris, Phil, and Cynthia as well as young bloods Jorge Herrera (ACxDC, Infest) and Andrew Solis (Deadbeat). I picked Chris up from his pad in Inglewood and we drove for more than an hour and a half through the snarling beast of Los Angeles's traffic (coincidentally there was a Dodgers



ALBERT LICANO

playoff game going on just a few freeway exits away) to meet up with Phil and Cynthia at Razorcake HQ. The conversation was wide ranging, beginning with their friendships with one another, motivation to continue playing/writing, and punk toilets and bathrooms around the country and around the world.

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Intro by Juan Espinosa
Interview by Juan and Daryl
Photos by Donofthedeat, Anthony Mehlhaff, and Albert Licano
Layout by Daryl



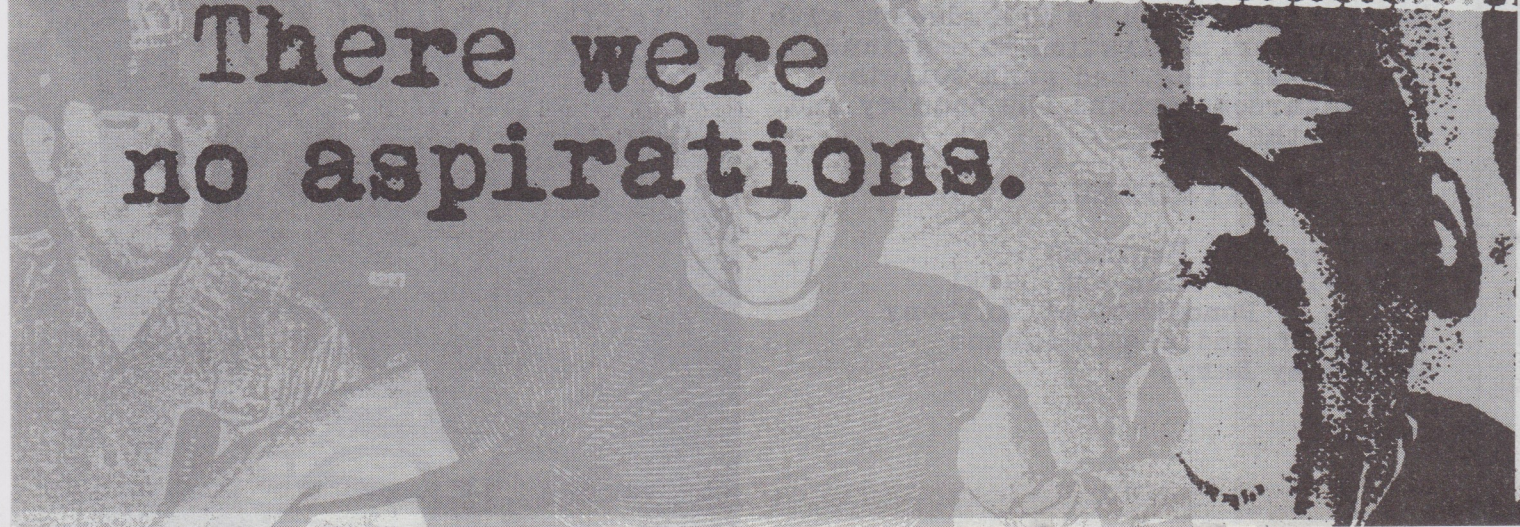
04



ANTHONY MEHLHAFF



There were
no aspirations.



Juan: Where did everybody meet?

Chris: Me and Phil met at a party. I used to skate this ramp in north Inglewood. The guy who owned it was buddies with Phil. They went to school together. I met him at that party. I think we were just talking about fuckin' grindcore.

Phil: Yeah. *Grindcrusher* (influential grindcore compilation album released by Earache Records).

Chris: Yeah, the *Grindcrusher* comp had come out. "You heard this comp?" "Oh yeah, fuck! This band, that band..."

Juan: So this was early '90s?

Phil: '89 or '90, yeah. That's when we met.

Chris: And then Cynthia, me, and Phil had a record... music... what the fuck...

Phil: A radio show! [laughs]

Chris: A music program!

Cynthia: [laughs] You're on your first sip! (of the beer Chris was drinking.)

Chris: Radio show... and Cynthia and her friend Kamilah used to call the show and ask if we had certain records or demos we could play and eventually we just told them to bring some of their records to the show and just hang out with us. That's how we met.

Juan: "Hour of the Goat" on KXLU. I got a little bit of a tidbit from somebody who knows you guys, Naomi (Sterio, former KXLU DJ) told me to ask you about the fire extinguisher at KXLU.

Cynthia: Oh my gosh.

Phil: Yeah, that was the final show. Our show was at one to two in the morning on Mondays, which was fine. But it was starting to get shitty because we had bands playing and we kind of wanted to move to midnight or eleven. So we asked the program director if they could move our show up and they said no.

Cynthia: It was right after KNAC. (KNAC was a well-known rock station based in Long Beach, Calif. that had some late night programming that would otherwise not air during regular hours.)

Phil: So we said "Well, fuck it then we're not gonna do it [anymore]." They said "that's fine," so we said, "All right then, our last show is this coming Monday." And then we told a bunch of people to come up and then a bunch of fucking people did come up.

Chris: It was a lot of fucking people.

Cynthia: It was a lot!

Chris: Like a show!

Phil: Yeah it was a full party.

Chris: Like a show at Gazzarri's (rock'n'roll night club on the Sunset Strip popular from the '60s through the '90s).

Phil: [laughs] People were getting pretty rowdy drinking and partying. I just remember we were like, "All right, we're signing off" and everyone was like [makes crowd yelling noise]. It was starting to get really crazy and...

Chris: Started to hear things breaking, too.

Phil: Shit was breaking. People were grabbing some shit and then, sure enough, someone let off a fire extinguisher. I think someone knew who it was...

Cynthia: [cooly] I know who it is. [laughs]

I got sprayed so bad because it was mainly to me; so they're spraying me and that's what happened.

Chris: That fire extinguisher shit is crazy man, like if you get caught up in that smoke.

Cynthia: You can't breathe.

Chris: What it does, it takes away the oxygen out of the air so you're breathing nothing. It's like getting waterboarded or something.

Phil: I just remember running down that hallway—because you couldn't see at all—and then finally when you got towards the elevator you could finally see. And so we just fucking left because it was literally smoked out, basically. And the DJ who came in after us, she was like "Holy fuck!" That shit was everywhere.

Cynthia: Did she stay?

Phil: I can't remember.

Cynthia: I remember I was trying to get her out. We were the last ones.

Phil: I just remember some faculty members happened to be coming that next morning. So our show was over at 2, 2:30 and when they showed up it was a total mess. I got in trouble but I just paid a fine. I didn't get kicked out. I was going to school there (Loyola Marymount University). But yeah, that was fun, man. There's a picture of everybody, too. But I don't know if anybody has that. Pat D maybe?

Cynthia: Somewhere. I've seen that picture.

Chris: That was a good show ("The Hour of the Goat"). A lot of people were listening to that. We were playing nothing but demo and 7" shit from the second wave black metal bands, doom, and death metal. And then we always hooked up the L.A. bands and let them play live. We had a lot of bands play live. Basically "Manic Metal" (extreme music late night radio show) was on before us on KNAC, but they would play like Cannibal Corpse and...

Phil: A lot of Earache and Metal Blade shit.

Chris: And we were playing all the demos and whatever. I used to try calling over there and tell them, "Hey man, could you tell your people [listeners] about our show because it's not competing, you know?" But they wouldn't do it. We ended up becoming friends with one of the guys later on.

Phil: He came on our show, too, once.

Chris: It was fun while it lasted.

Phil: It was basically a year.

Chris: I did it for a year and it just got to be too hard. I was riding my bike to work in Santa Monica. Riding it back to Inglewood and then I'd ride the bike to LMU to do the show. And then ride the bike back to Inglewood and then sleep for three hours. And I was doing my zine (*Pessimiser*) and I was trying to book shows and then ride the bike back to Santa Monica. [laughs] God damn.

Phil: Did you wheelie the whole way back? [laughs]

Daryl: That was the first collaborative project you two—Chris and Phil—did?

Chris: Yeah, and a lot things happened out of that show because Gasp formed because of that show.

Cynthia: Yes.

Chris: Despise You. Flame Retarded. Fuck, what other bands?

Phil: Sean Cole (Toys That Kill, F.Y.P) was up there.

Chris: There was a little of an F.Y.P connection there.

Phil: Crom played with F.Y.P.

Chris: Crom started loosely out of that.

Daryl: It's funny; these are a lot of punk bands coming out of a metal show as you described it.

Phil: Right. And it was on a predominantly indie station.

Chris: When we had our show, the shit that college radio was breaking was Nirvana, Soundgarden, Helmet. Those were all bands that were being played on college radio, especially KXLU. I don't know about nowadays, but back then they were kind of the leader for all college radio in the U.S. It was them and WFMU in New Jersey that were two heavy hitters and everyone else would follow suit. I'm not saying that the other places weren't doing anything cool, but KXLU has always been a pretty pioneering type joint or whatever. Social Distortion. Red Hot Chili Peppers. Nirvana. All these bands, that's kind of where they started was at KXLU. Fuckin' Beck! The guy would come up to our show a couple times.

Phil: I fucked with him. I didn't even know who he was. I think it was the first time he must have been at KXLU and he walked up said, "Do you know where KXLU is?" and I'm like, [pointing] "Yeah, right over there." It was the other side of the campus. [laughs] He's like, "Cool, thanks!" Later, I think it was Andre (Soto, member of Crom) who was like, "Dude, that was that Beck, dude!" I'm like, "It was? I don't know." I was just fucking around, probably high, being a dick. [laughs]

Chris: When I was listening to KXLU a long time ago, we used to listen to it during the day. They pretty much exclusively were playing punk the whole time. My friend George, he lived on Yorktown, his back yard you could pretty much throw a rock and hit the LMU parking lot. We were like, "Where is that place? We wanna go over there." I remember it was right around the '84 Olympics in L.A. They had done the construction at LMU. They built the gym to host some Olympic basketball.

We went over there and were asking people, "Where's that radio station?" We were looking around and a dude told us. We went into the fucking radio station and it was Agent Ava. She was a DJ at the time. I only knew her voice. When I walked down the hall I told George, "Fuck. That's fuckin' Agent Ava dude! We're close!" [laughs] I was listening to—you know you have that echo from the speaker broadcasting the station in the hallway—and she's talking in the room and you could kind of hear. I went over there and there she was Agent Ava. I was like "Oh shit!" Starstruck! She was like, "Who are you guys?" And we were like, "We just listen to your show." She's like, "come in" and she

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ALBERT LICANO

In the '84 Olympics
I remember all the
stoners in Inglewood

selling their
parking spaces
in front of
their
houses.

XXXXXXXXXX

DONOTHEDEAD

let us play a couple records, back announce them and shit. Later on, fuckin' years later, when I had my zine I interviewed her. She was a DJ in Honolulu at some big corporate station. I just told her, "I don't know if you remember but that was really cool that you let us come in and hang out. That was nice of you." I was like thirteen years.

Cynthia: Did she remember?

Chris: I don't know if she really remembered. Probably not. Probably smoking so much pot. Grass! [laughs] A whole lid of grass! So Naomi, thanks for wasting about twenty minutes of everybody's time. [laughs]

Daryl: What do you recall of the '84 Olympics and how does it influence how you feel about the Olympics coming back in 2028?

Chris: I remember all the stoners in Inglewood putting the "Go for the Gold" buttons on the zipper of their jeans and people selling their parking spaces in front of their houses. Doesn't influence how I feel about the Olympics coming back in 2028, but I'm glad they are. Brings more money and jobs into L.A. and helps fast track some of the transportation projects they're working on like the LAX people mover, et cetera.

Juan: Relating to Pessimiser Records releases, where did you get all those gnarly photos of people shooting up and stuff? Because, artwork nowadays, you can just Google an image but back then you couldn't find images like that.

Chris: Magazines and books. Stuff like that. You'd do your homework and fuckin' spend some time and look through old book stores. I saved a bunch of shit from when I was a kid that I thought was... or had touched me in some way, I don't know. So I had a couple whole boxes of different shit to use.

Phil: I worked at Barnes & Noble. Is that where you came in and...? [laughs]

Chris: Yeah, we'd find shit at Barnes & Noble and just bring a razor blade in to take just one page. [laughs]

Phil: Me, Will, and Andre all worked at Barnes & Noble at the same time.

Daryl: Crom guys?

Phil: Yeah. We all got hired at the same time.

Chris: The one in Marina Del Rey?

Phil: Yeah, and Will got fired within a week. He just fucks off way too much.

Chris: Andre is still there. He's manager now. [laughs]

Phil: I remember we found out at one point when I was leaving that—what are those things that go off if you walk out with a book?

Cynthia: Sensors?

Phil: Sensors. At work one day one guy was just talking to another guy and he was like, "Yeah but those things don't even work down there." I was just like...

Cynthia: Bing!

Phil: Bing! So when Andre would work there, we'd go in with our book bags flat and then come out of there packed to the back, all heavy. Good ol' Barnes & Noble.

Cynthia: Now you know Barnes & Noble is out of business because of... [laughs]

Phil: Because of a few of us.

Chris: Shitty punk fliers. "I need to make a shitty punk flier. Let me fuck up this \$80 book." [laughs]

Daryl: This kind of goes along with you guys doing a radio show, a zine, and running a record label. I always appreciate people who play music who take that extra step to do other stuff as well. Like you, Phil, have the recording studio (Veracuda) and record local bands and stuff. Where does that motivation come from, and do you find it in other aspects of your life to be out there slugging away being involved with projects?

Chris: With the record label (Pessimiser), what I used to like the most is when we'd finally bring the record in from the printer, put them together, and how happy the bands were with the finished product. Like, "Man, that looks fucking good. I'm stoked!" That's all I wanted. That's what I got out of that.

As far as a motivation to do all those things—I mean, fuck, I don't know. It's challenging. It keeps you out of trouble, I guess. I always played sports my whole life—so there was always that wanting to get better at something—and I guess you could kind of tie that in somehow. At that time—and every era has it, it's not unique to this shit—but when there's so much new cool shit going on, everything's like, "Damn. Fuckin' Dystopia came. Damn. Did you hear that ET (Excruciating Terror)? Fuck." There was so many things that were just hitting you like, "that's faster than I've ever heard," and "that's darker than I've ever heard." There was so much cool shit. And then everybody kind of knew each other. Look at the radio show and look at the shit that happened around that.

Daryl: It sounds like you felt a responsibility to support these bands. Where does that sense of responsibility come from?

Chris: Maybe because no one else was and because I cared about them as people. I thought—I mean, they're my friends. Most of them. [laughs]

Phil: "Friends."

Chris: Yeah, "friends." I don't know if that really answers the question. You're not getting money out of it. You're not getting nothing out of it. But you're getting something out of it and that is you're a part of something special that's happening. I wasn't in those bands. I was just putting them out. I would offer my input on like "That (album) cover is not really hitting. We should do this." But respectfully though, because I'm not in that fucking band, you know? It's cool to be a part of one of the many pieces that makes up the Dystopia / Suffering Luna split 7". That's what I got out of it.

Phil: I just think playing in the bands was always something... knowing Chris when he started doing the label that's when I—well, my first band Fresh American Lamb had already done a couple of records—but we did a split with 16 for his last zine.

Chris: It was the fourth and final issue of my fanzine that came with a 7".

Phil: That kind of started the label from there. Right away it was like, "Let's put out a Crom record."

Chris: It was so fuckin' easy, too. Maybe I'm just... what do you call it when...?

Daryl: "Rose-tinted glasses"... [laughs]

Chris: Yeah, but like revisionist history or whatever, right? So we're watching Divisia, Gasp, and Dystopia in some shithole warehouse in Culver City. And I talk to one of the guys. "Hey man, we should do a split 7" "Yeah, fuck yeah! Let's do it!" It was just pure and it was easy. I mean, it wasn't easy, but "We agreed on that so let's fucking do it, man. Let's get down." There was so much stuff that was happening at that time. Everybody was recording. So many things were coming out. This was just L.A. Imagine all the fuckin' Bay Area shit or wherever the fuck. All over the place. I'm sure in those scenes the same things were happening. There were so many bands.

Phil: And all of them were good. Think about all those Slap A Ham records. Same thing. Sound Pollution. They were all labels where someone took the reins. "I'm gonna make this record." Then probably in the same way get the money from that record to make the next one. Get the money to keep going. It's not like you're fuckin' putting away a nest egg. [laughs]

Chris: Fucking hardly. I look at some of those old ads and it's like the *Cry Now, Cry Later* (compilation series), double 7", 40" by 80" poster, \$3 post paid." I'm like "Fuck, dude!" [laughs]

Phil: Should have just given them away.

Chris: I mean postage was cheaper back then, but fuck. That record now, you could probably sell it at a show for fifteen bucks and kids wouldn't even blink. Back then anything over five bucks, "You're a fucking piece of shit dude! You're fucking ripping off the scene!" [laughs] It wasn't a money thing. It was just trying to put out as much cool shit. When I put out that *Cry Now* comp, I really was crossing my fingers that there was actually one thousand people in the world who wanted to buy that thing. [laughs]

Daryl: Because it was a double seven inch?

Chris: Yeah, because it was expensive. There were four (center) labels. There's two records. The fucking cover was a crazy fold out where everybody got a panel of artwork. [laughs] I think we paid the printer to fold it because I was folded out at that point. I had this piece of plywood in my bedroom that I measured out all these marks on the piece of plywood. When I laid the cover down—not yet folded, it shows you where you need to fold it—because that thing had like a lot of folds! Once you do two of them, the third one has got to be a little thicker or else you're just gonna start fucking it up. You can't fold it too many times or it just starts to buckle.

I remember Dystopia was leaving on tour and they came by to pick up some records. I think they were going out with Embittered (U.K.) in Europe and this was before 9/11, so you could get to the airport five minutes before your flight and get on. They're all smoking in my room, fucking folding all this shit up, and shoving it in their backpacks. "Fuck, we gotta go man. The plane leaves

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out of it.

You're not
getting nothing
out of it.

But you're
getting
something
out of it and
that is you're a
part of
something
special that's
happening.

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in half an hour." I live close to the airport (LAX), so they could just get there in time. I remember the print jobs on the Suffering Luna one because it had that split fountain print. It was like a faded—it went from blue to pink. There was a little green in there, too. That was a kind of expensive. 16—that fuckin' *Drop Out* record. Fuck, that thing was expensive, man.

Phil: Full color.

Chris: It was a full-color gatefold so already you're behind the fuckin' 8 ball there. Then it was an LP plus a bonus clear 7" and a full color insert. I was pretty ambitious with that one, but I think that's the one that did the best out of all the stuff.

Daryl: So you have this mass amount of experience hand assembling thousands upon thousands of records and in 2015 Despise You releases a one-sided 7" and you decide to stencil all the covers.

Chris: Get back in it. [laughs] Yeah. When I first started it, I was stoked. "This is fucking cool, man. Everybody's got different shit." Then after a few hundred of them I was like, "Fuck, man." Because the stencil—you can only spray like five records, maybe ten—and you got to cut it again. So I cut a motherfucking ton of those fucking stencils. [laughs] I would just lay them out on this big piece of plywood in my back yard.

Daryl: Back to the plywood! [laughs]

Chris: I have that piece of plywood that I spray painted all those records on. It looks cool. All those squares of over-spray and shit. I'm gonna donate that to somebody one of these days. Looking back, it's fun. I started doing those and then when we put it online we started getting a lot of fucking orders that night. I was like, "Man, I got a lot of work to do." But, yeah, they all came out nice and if you look online, there really is no two that are the same. I used a lot of different color combos and shadows and bullshit. Tried to make them look nice. Came out good but that's probably the last one I'll do like that. [laughs]

Phil: Until you come up with another bright idea in five years.

Chris: "This is like a triple stencil on foil!" [laughs]

Phil: "I actually want to get back into the folding!"

Chris: "I'm actually gonna do every one with a Sharpie!" [laughs] It opens up and it's origami.

Cynthia: A fucking swan comes out of it and shit. Good idea.

Chris: That record, the *Fear of Smell* comp. That guy hand-did a bunch of shit on those and I thought that was cool. I have a have a handful of records that were hand-done like that. It might be a Crudos record that was screened and then there was some silver writing on the back. The band Slug did something. There was a few that I was like, "Man, that looks nice!"

Phil: People are still doing that now. I think Youth Attack does kinda crazy covers.

Daryl: They're pretty extreme about it.

Phil: Tom Hazelmyer too, he does...

Chris: That's that AmRep [Amphetamine Reptile Records] guy?

Phil: Yeah, he does all those screen-printed records.

Chris: Our bass player, he plays in that band Deadbeat. Their record looked cool. They silk screened their covers with some silver ink. Probably used T-shirt ink...

Daryl: Plastisol.

Chris: Yeah, like that Plastisol shit because it's got that thick, bubbly kind of deal. But it came out nice. It looked good. If you're doing a lot of them you're gonna be saving some weekends. Not much time on the golf course. [laughs]

Phil: Yeah, all those kids on the golf course. [laughs]

Chris: A late tee time.

Juan: The first Despise You show was in 2006? Murderfest.

Cynthia: 2007.

Phil: Think it was, yeah.

Juan: Why did it take so long for DY to actually play a live show?

Chris: I think we recorded the *Possessed to Skate* (compilation) record and then we just stopped doing anything. We're still not the kind of band that's like, "Hey man, we gotta get this tour so we could..." We don't give a shit about that. We just do our thing, you know? We just stopped recording stuff and just stopped doing the band, really. And then Chris bumped into Phil. Didn't he see you somewhere?

Phil: Chris Dodge (Spazz, Slap A Ham Records, Trappist), yeah. He had moved out here. I remember now. Rob (Alaniz, former Despise You drummer) did that interview (with *Short, Fast, and Loud* fanzine) where he kind of mentioned some of us in there. And then Dodge was at a show and I was pretty drunk. Rob put it in my head about possibly playing. So I just hit up Dodge, "Hey man, would you want to play in Despise You if we did a show?" and he was super stoked but I kind of forgot that I hit him up.

Later that week he was like, "So are we gonna do it?" I'm like, "Do what?" and he says "Despise You!" He was kind of the catalyst. We talked to him and then talked to Rob. Then we started jamming and then we were thinking of people to do the vocals because Lulu (Hernandez) the original girl—I don't even know where she's at. It's been fucking years since we've last seen her and she had nothing to do with the scene. She won "Miss Commerce" (pageant) one of those years.

Chris: She was in ninth and tenth grade when we recorded those records.

Phil: And then we hit up Cynthia to do it.

Juan: And Cynthia, you were playing bass in Gasp?

Cynthia: Once upon a time, and back again.

Juan: Back then did you have any other experience with vocals? How did you take to singing with Despise You?

Cynthia: Despise You is a totally different vocal that I've never done.

Daryl: How would you describe it for someone who has never heard Despise You?

Cynthia: I mean I'm a big fan of Despise You and so I was stoked, of course. I just had to imagine myself...

Chris: Just hollering.

Cynthia: Yeah, I had to imagine myself being some little girl [laughs], which is basically what it was! "I've got to give this a shot" you know? And it worked out.

Juan: Going back to things that inspired you. I feel that the guitar riff, in particular the breakdown in "No More Feelings," is one of the heaviest riffs I've ever heard. What inspired you to make that riff? The hardcore bands—especially nowadays, that do breakdowns like that—I don't think their stuff measures up to how heavy that riff is. I only mention that because I notice it's a very popular song when you guys play live. Everybody gets into it.

Phil: Yeah, that's the song usually. Jerry (Flores, Excruciating Terror) wrote that one.

Chris: We were writing so much shit, dude, I don't even remember. There are only a couple things I remember about when we wrote a certain riff because we were rapid fire. We'd go to Jerry's house. We'd fuck around with some stuff and record it on a boombox so that we wouldn't forget what we just wrote, and we'd move on to the next song. "How about this part?" "All right, cool." It was fast! We wrote a lot of stuff very fast. I think it was because everybody was in different bands and maybe—and I'm not trying to talk for him—but maybe Jerry wanted to do some shit in Excruciating Terror that didn't really fit with them. But now that he's with us he can do that because we're cool with it.

Phil: It was interesting because we were all coming from different backgrounds. Rob was pretty much a death metal-type drummer who never really did blast beats, so it was kind of new to him. I was playing in Crom at that time and Jerry had Excruciating Terror, Frank was in Stapled Shut. So we were all throwing in different stuff. There are some times, if I listen to some of the songs I remember, "Oh yeah, Frank wrote that one," or "I wrote that one," or "Jerry wrote that one," or we did it together. It was a cool mix—"Let me try this riff here because it doesn't work with one of my other bands." But to Chris's point, yeah we would just write, write, write and then it'd be like, "We have twenty songs. Let's go record."

Chris: Then we'd listen back to the songs in the studio on a boombox.

Phil: Couldn't tell what the fuck half the time.

Chris: But just to remember what they were because we didn't have them all wired.

Phil: Relearn all these...

Chris: "Oh yeah go play... that whatever song..." We just had to rewind it. Start at the beginning. "Oh yeah, I remember how that goes." Then play through it once in the studio and tell the dude we're ready and do it. Those sessions—all the different 7"s and whatever—those were pretty much recorded in a day and then mixed the next day or the next weekend. Come in the morning, set up all the shit, record all the music, do all the



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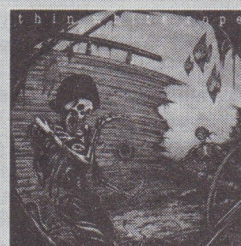
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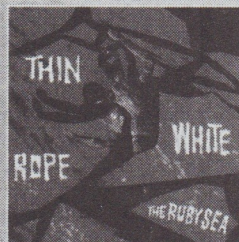


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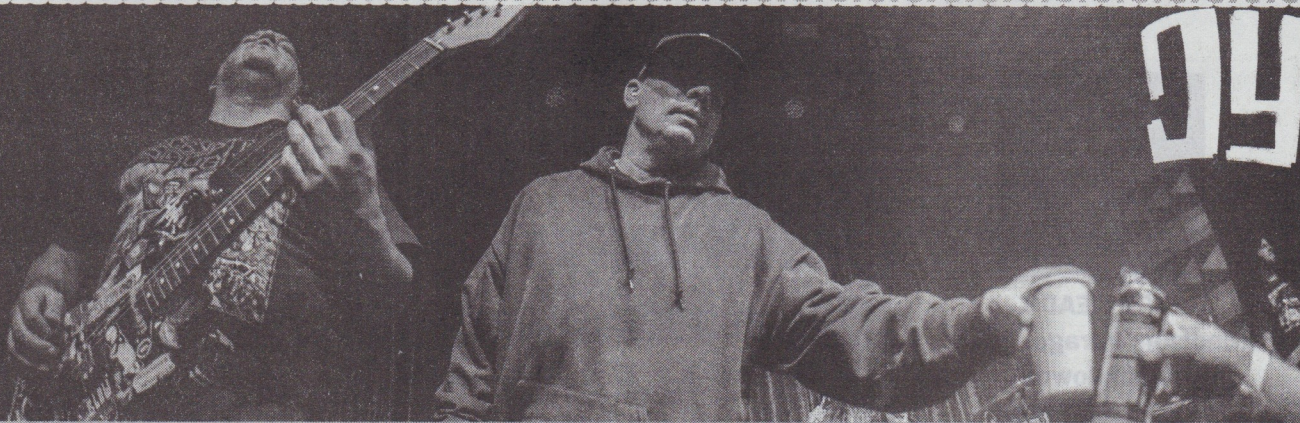


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vocals, and then leave at like three in the morning. It was always one-day shots. That's how I remember it.

Daryl: So you're saying, "Despise You was never like a real band, et cetera." Your words not mine.

Chris: Not that it wasn't a real band, but we always took it seriously.

Daryl: You weren't going for it.

Chris: Yeah, there was never a time where like, "Hey man, we should quit our jobs, go on tour." It's just like we'd get together and do our thing. There were no aspirations.

Daryl: And I understand you didn't want to play shows because you just didn't want to play live?

Chris: Because I hate being the center of attention. I still don't like it.

Daryl: So then why create aliases and why not be up front on the records?

Chris: The reason for the aliases was because I didn't want people to have an idea of what they were going to hear before they heard it. Like, "Oh this is an Excruciating Terror, Crom, Stapled Shut side project. It's going to sound like this." Because there's a shitload of that, "It's got the fuckin' dude from whatever band or whatever band..." "All right, cool. It's like industrial rap." [laughs] So that was the reason for that.

Phil: I think it also stemmed from the zine (*Pessimiser*).

Chris: The zine all had aliases in it too. Because I didn't want to write for *Newsweek*, I didn't give a shit...

Juan: "Alamoe Joe"?

Phil: Alamoe Joe!

Chris: I'll tell you who Alamoe Joe really is! [laughs] Alamoe Joe is an old Cuban man. He used to run an ice cream truck in Arbor Village (Southwestern Inglewood neighborhood) and he had a fuckin' machete in the back window on coat hangers. We used to jump on his truck when we were little and ride a couple blocks on the back. When the kids would start laughing and pointing then he knew we were on the back of the truck. He'd grab the fucking machete and come out of the truck and chase us. That's Alamoe Joe!

Daryl: Wow, and he contributed to your zine, too? That's awesome! [laughs]

Chris: Yeah, he was the main writer! The main guy! [laughs]

Juan: I remember him now that you mention it, but I don't remember ever seeing the machete.

Chris: Yeah, back window dude. Alamoe Joe, dude. It was painted with a tooth brush on the side of his fuckin' truck. Looked like total shit dude. Oh, man! That guy probably sold coke out of that fuckin' truck. [laughs]

Phil: I remember your zine had someone from your school.

Chris: That was my buddy Georgie Rubio who, as a kid, got sponsored by SMA and Thunder Trucks when he was eleven years olds. He was the rippingest kid. A couple of those aliases were his older sisters because I was way older than him and they were my age: "Norma, whoever. Put her in there." [laughs]

Juan: You fooled me because I ended up looking those names up in the phone book. [Phil laughs]

Chris: Actually, that Norma girl, her older sister Adriana I just bumped into her at Best Bargain (neighborhood supermarket) on Arbor Vitae two days ago. That doesn't mean shit for this interview, though. [laughs] Just some good stuff to talk about. She's a grandma now, by the way.

Juan: Since you guys started playing shows, you guys have toured where?

Chris: We've been to Europe a couple times. Japan. All over the U.S.

Phil: A couple times in Canada.

Chris: Played in TJ.

Juan: Where have your favorite crowds been?

Chris: My favorite crowds are L.A. It's the best. Fuckin' L.A. What can you say? But Boston is good. New York is always good. Japan was all good. Tijuana was good. All the shows are good. St. Louis wasn't good. [laughs]

Phil: That's one we're not gonna go back to.

Chris: St. Louis wasn't that good. Actually wasn't good.

Phil: There was one in Europe that wasn't that good. And that was probably... I can't remember.

Chris: Switzerland was a little weird.

Phil: Switzerland!

Chris: I mean the people are cool, it's just everyone there is a billionaire so how many punks are you gonna have?

Phil: Yeah, a pretty small scene but they have money set aside for the arts so you get paid well.

Chris: If it's on your way to somewhere else then you might as well go get that cash because touring Europe is fucking expensive. The last time we went to Europe, I think we... [long pause]

Phil: He's getting a migraine. [laughs]

Daryl: Flashbacks. [laughs]

Chris: Fuck, man. We went all the way to Portugal, so about as fuckin' west as you can go. And it cost so much money in tolls to get there and back through. Spain and France, god damn. Every fuckin' twenty minutes our driver [to us] "Twenty Euros." I'm like god damn, dude. It's like every time we stop, "All right we gotta sell twenty-four shirts to pay that one" or whatever the math is on it. Because you know we sell our shit cheap. It's kind of our curse sometimes. We want everyone to be able to get what they want and I guess we'll be the ones to pay for it at the end of the night. [laughs] Fuckin' floors.

Daryl: This is a matter of accessibility for kids—you play a lot of shows that aren't at big Hollywood venues because it's great to play shows in your community for the kids who care about your band.

Chris: Those are the shows we like the most. The small shows.

Daryl: Because the kids come out and they lose their shit.

Chris: And we can keep it cheap and there are no security guards or there's no extra horseshit that I never liked when I was going to shows at that age. I mean, the bigger shows are cool, too, but I guess it's whatever your preference is. And we've played different places, different sizes. I like the basements and the small places, but it is good once in a while to play somewhere where you don't have to worry about someone fuckin' falling on your legs.

Phil: Cynthia getting thrashed. [laughs]

Chris: Cynthia's lip getting busted.

Daryl: Getting shut down.

Phil: Yeah!

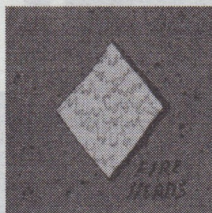
Chris: Backyard shows—if we're gonna play a backyard show, it's like rolling the dice because a couple of us work weekends, so you take your work shift off and you're not getting paid for that. And now everybody's at the show and if the cops come, now you're fucked. You didn't get to play. You lost money at work. It sucks like that.

Phil: I don't think we've had one like that in a while, because I don't think we take those risks like we used to.

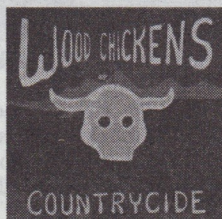
Chris: We played in a living room in Portland the last time we were up there and that shit was cool.

Phil: Yeah, that was cool.

Chris: That was better than a legit club show because we did two shows in one day. That was for an all ages, the other one was...



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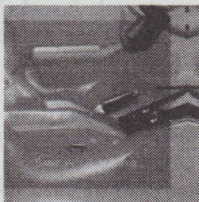


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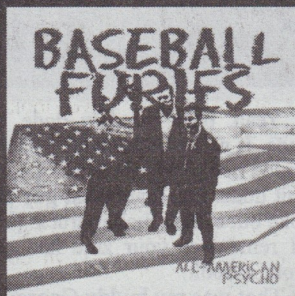
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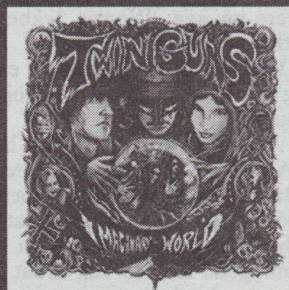
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We sell our shit cheap.
It's kind of our curse
sometimes. We want
everyone to be able to
get what they want.

Cynthia: Twenty-one plus.

Chris: Which we don't like doing that either, but some places that's all they have. That's always been the case. How many places stick around, you know?

Daryl: When you're younger, if you have the money to spend on merch, you spend your fucking money on merch because that's your lifeline at that age. When you grow up, you're like, "I got a billion fucking records and T-shirts, why the fuck do I need more?" [laughs]

Chris: "How much more black shit do I need?" [laughs]

Phil: Black shirts. Fuck. Even on tours—whether it's Despise You or Crom or something else—I always end up with two or three shirts of the other bands. I'm just like, "Fuck, I just brought home five shirts. Jesus Christ."

Juan: Chris, I noticed that when you go on tour you like to take photos of the bathrooms you go to. Why?

Chris: I just started doing it as kind of a joke, and it still is actually. But I think I'm gonna try to put out a book at some point. I'm not in negotiations with anyone just yet. [laughs] We'll see what happens but I'd like to put out a coffee table book of bathrooms in all these total shitholes that we sleep in and play in. That would be cool. No real writing just: "Fresno, California" or whatever it is. Maybe the venue or house.

Juan: Which one has been the worst?

Chris: The worst bathroom?

Cynthia: The one with water or without water? Because we've seen both that are bad. [laughs]

Chris: Man, that C Squat in New York—this is before Despise You—but we were on tour with Grief and 16. I was there because my label was going and I was selling their shirts and selling my records. That was a pretty fucking bad bathroom in such a bad, bad place.

Daryl: For the record, it is a squat.

Chris: Yeah. They're all equally pretty shitty.

Phil: The hole in France. It was just a fucking hole in the ground.

Chris: It was on old mirror factory in France.

Phil: Yeah, it was just a hole. And it was fucked.

Cynthia: But it had tiles or something like that.

Phil: It had tiles where you could stand?

Cynthia: Yeah, but it wasn't actually a hole, hole.

Phil: Maybe I just didn't even look.

Chris: But I mean if your bowel needs to go, I understand. [laughs] Fuckin' punk bathrooms have always been like that. Gilman was like that. Everything has been like that.

Phil: Where the doors don't close. [laughs] You have to fucking sit down holding the door.

Chris: If you had 150 people coming into your house every day taking shits and pisses, your bathroom would look pretty fucked up too. From wear and tear.

Phil: Stickers all over it.

Cynthia: Wear and tear! [laughs]

Chris: Just your garden variety wear and tear.

Phil: All the TP going down the toilet.

Chris: When we were kids, I think the first thing we would do when we got to the show was just put the whole roll of toilet paper in the toilet and flush it. [laughs] So stupid. What the fuck does that do? "I don't have to take a shit. No one can now. Fuck it. I don't want anyone taking a shit in here."

Juan: Phil where did the nickname Pegasus come from?

Phil: Oh my god? When did I use that?

Juan: Naomi had you sign a book a long time ago. You wrote your nickname was Pegasus.

Phil: I think there was some dickhead at my school who was a DJ for raves and stuff. I think he actually became a real DJ. But I remember at one point I said I was DJ Pegasus to fuck with him. I don't know why. Probably thinking of *Clash of the Titans* or some shit like that. I think it was that book that Naomi started posting on Instagram.

Cynthia: Yeah, she posted a lot of stuff.

Juan: Going back to that book. Actually, Cynthia you were roommates with Naomi at one point?

Cynthia: Yeah, actually, when I was pregnant with my son. Then she went off and got married.

Phil: And had two kids.

Juan: In that book you wrote...

Cynthia: Uh oh.

Juan: That your hobbies include to, "Shit, eat, piss, drink, and smoke lots of dope."

Cynthia: Uh oh. I hope nobody from work hears this! [laughs]

Chris: Some things never change.

Phil: Yeah. Sounds about right.

Juan: Which one of those hobbies do you still enjoy?

Cynthia: Oh probably all of them, I'm sure.

Phil: That's what you put? My god.

Cynthia: My gosh, I don't even remember that. That's pretty bad. I've got to be careful what I write nowadays. [laughs]

Phil: You were young then.

Chris: Younger.

Phil: Younger, that's right.

Daryl: Have you ever explained Despise You to your children? Has that ever come up?

Cynthia: My child and Chris's child both went to the Despise You shows.

Daryl: But before that, was there ever a point where they were like, "What is this?" And you were like "All right, so..."

Chris: I took my daughter to a few shows and she was super into it. Now she's older and she doesn't think I'm cool any more. I think that's pretty normal. But she was into it. It was cool. We'd sit her behind the drums in the safety area and put some ear protection on her. "Those guys are doing drugs in the bathroom!" "Yeah, that's what they were doing, I think."

Phil: What about Cazmir [Cynthia's son] when did he first...

Cynthia: I remember when I took him to Gilman. He was actually on stage with us. Back then he thought it was really nothing much, but now it's a big deal because he goes to shows and sees Despise You shirts so he's just like, "That's my mom!" I say, "You really tell them that?" "I do! And they get all excited!" [laughs]

Chris: "She used to change my diaper. She used to wipe my bottom." [laughs]

Daryl: I've only seen the pictures of the Despise You skateboards. How did that come about? Doing that for the shows and such?

Chris: Well, I've always skated. I thought it would be cool to throw out a skateboard. I'd just draw on them, throw 'em out. We haven't done it in a while because the guy I used to get boards from, I don't know what happened. He's out of touch. But I used to get blank skateboards from a couple different people and then draw on them, thrown them out. People were into it. I probably did like thirty of them or something. I'd like to do them all the time but carrying those things on the plane, they don't fit in the shirt box really. You got to pay to put them on the plane just to throw them away for free.

Phil: Do you have a hook up on a banana board?

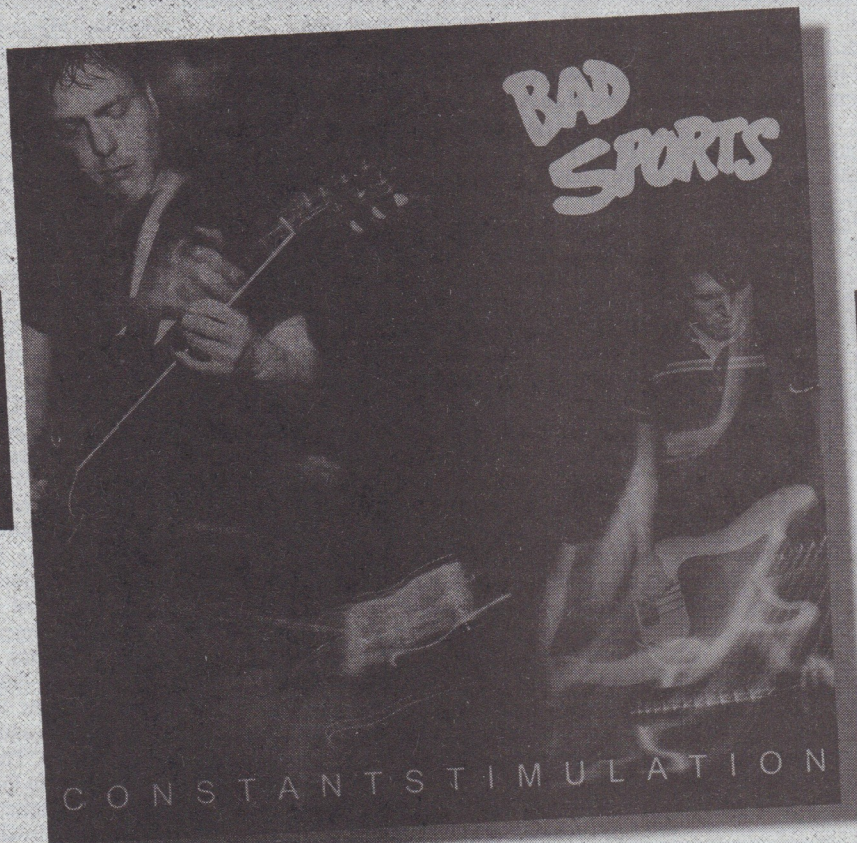
Chris: I should do a plastic banana board. You can only ride them barefoot. [laughs]

Daryl: Or with Birkenstocks on.

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Chris: I want to get a fuckin' long board. It'd have to be an L.A. show. Some big fuckin' Skatemaster Tate style shit. Fuckin' eighty inches. Throw it out. I don't even have that much shit to draw on that though. I'd have to do something like someone on a long noose.

Phil: A really long noose.

Chris: A real fucking long one.

Juan: I'm pretty sure I already know the answer to this question, but what is everyone's favorite L.A. sports team and why?

Chris: Mine would be the Kings. That's what I grew up listening to at my house; they'd always be playing the Kings games. The Forum was right down the street from my house. We used to walk to the games sometimes. But I like all the L.A. sports teams: Dodgers, Lakers, Kings, Rams [laughs]. They're doing fuckin' good.

Cynthia: Isn't it obvious? (Cynthia is wearing a Dodgers shirt and her hair is dyed blue.) Definitely grew up listening to, watching the Dodgers, Lakers.

Phil: I'd have to say the Lakers. I played basketball for years. I used to go to more games when they were cheaper. I'm sure they're gonna be more expensive given LeBron. But yeah, Lakers and Raiders when they were in L.A. but that was a long time ago.

Chris: The fuckin' T-Birds [laughs]. L.A. Lazars.

Daryl: Is that the roller derby team?

Phil: No, it was an indoor soccer team. They used to play at the Forum, right?

Chris: The T-Birds were the roller derby team. They used to play at the Olympic (Auditorium). That's some old school shit where they were throwing beer bottles at the opposing team. Bums sleeping in the fuckin' rafters.

Daryl: It's the same opposing team every single match but they're just named something different.

Chris: Yeah. Like the fuckin' Generals or Globetrotters. I saw the Globetrotters at the Forum with my grandparents.

Phil: I saw the Lazars a couple times.

Chris: I saw them, too. Indoor soccer, man. What a joke. Surprised that didn't take off huh?

Daryl: When you take a break from the blast beats and the brutality, what's the ultimate chill out band to listen to?

Chris: Chill out band? I listen to all kinds of music. You mean chill out like...

Daryl: Just something that's not fast.

Chris: [long pause]

Juan: Do you still have your Rosey Grier (former NFL player turned gospel singer) record?

Chris: [points to Phil] He fuckin' bought it for me!

Phil: Committed? [laughs]

Chris: Yeah. I do. I was going through my records the other day. I was looking for some old Malcolm McClaren record.

Phil: Rosey Grier! That popped up.

Chris: Yeah. He was in there. It's like life size. His face on the cover.

Phil: I was gonna say Steely Dan was yours.

Chris: Yeah. Fuckin' Steely Dan. Down in Marina Del Rey in a condo. Sitting on some wicker furniture. A blonde, a brunette. Cocktails.

Phil: You're flipping a quarter. Listening to some Steely Dan. [laughs]

Chris: Steely Dan is good. Norah Jones has got some bangers.

Phil: Cynthia?

Chris: Fuckin' Bob Marley or something.

Cynthia: [laughs] Yeah, how chill do you want to go?

Chris: Ziggy Marley. Ziggy Marley Jr. [laughs]

Cynthia: The third. Ziggy The Third.

Phil: I listen to a lot of soundtrack stuff. Like Bernard Herman and a bunch of different films. To me that stuff is pretty relaxing.

Chris: Chicano soul stuff, too.

Phil: Of course.

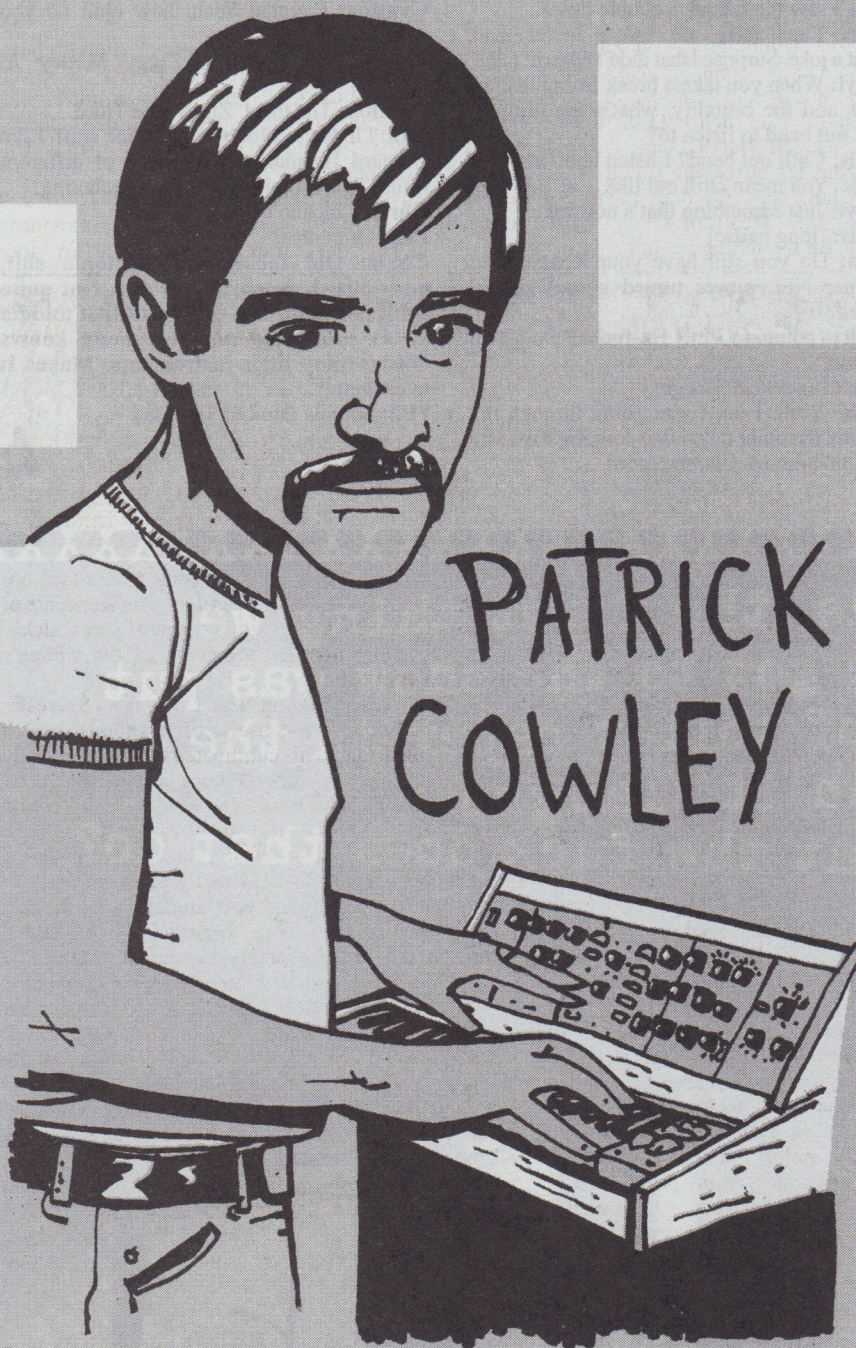
Chris: Old fuckin' San Antonio shit, mid-'60s. L.A. shit, mid-'60s. Not quite soul, not quite doo-wop. But that middle sweet spot. And not everybody knows how to play their instruments. Makes it even better.

Phil: Sounds familiar. [laughs]



When we were kids, the first thing we would do when we got to the show was put the whole roll of toilet paper in the toilet and flush it. (laughs)
So stupid, what the fuck does that do?

ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO ELECTRONIC MUSIC PIONEER AND DISCO PRODUCER



By Billups Allen

Illustrations by Danny Martin ++ Layout by Todd Taylor

In 1978 a DJ subscription-only remix of the already popular Donna Summer song "I Feel Love" went out in the mail. It was 15:43 long. The bass line was looped so overdubbed synthesizer effects could be added. This particular version of the song went largely unnoticed by the general public and did nothing to make producer Patrick Cowley a household name. But dancers in nightclubs reacted. They may have been unaware and/or unconcerned about what they were hearing, but they reacted. They danced.

The first time I heard the name Patrick Cowley I was in a band with a friend in Brooklyn. She figured out songs to cover and brought them in without playing the originals for us. Thinking the mystery was fun and not being totally internet savvy at the time, it was a while before I heard Cowley's original version of "Teen Planet": a boppy rocker released as a single for his label Megatone Records. The song came across as Devo-inspired to me, with sci-fi lyrics and bouncy melodies carried on a raspy-sounding keyboard. Years later, I discovered Devo to be devotees of Cowley's sounds and his seminal dark electronic album *Time Warp*. Cowley's interests spanned a range of music. During his short career, he released electrocutured versions of rock'n'roll, morose electronic masterpieces, and quality pornographic soundtracks. But Cowley is best known as a disco producer who broadened the definition of electronic dance music.

The word disco often evokes images of The Bee Gees dressed in white suits and Donna Summer's teased hair swaying high above a madly refracting sequin evening dress, creating an idol under the wildly rotating light of a disco ball. And for many, those are the more palatable images. Disco in America is largely remembered as a joke: an embarrassing fad Americans let themselves be taken in by. It clogged the market with artistically bereft records. It caused family restaurants across the country to open after business hours and serve as cocaine-fueled playgrounds to people in unfortunate suits. It forced established artists to make a disco song for a paycheck. Established rock groups like The Rolling Stones and Kiss had disco-laden tracks to answer for at the end of the '70s, stuffing their rock sensibilities into the legendary "four on the floor" drum beat—a steady, uniformly accented beat in 4/4 time—a rhythm pattern that's easy to move to even if you can't dance. Muppets, Disney characters, and popular movie themes got the disco treatment. It was easy to disco up anything during this time and make it marketable. This ad nauseam practice helped run disco as a genre into the ground as quickly as any fad that's swept the nation.

Yet disco often doesn't get credit for its globalizing properties. Soul and funk bands

with a penchant for the correct use of the "four on the floor" drum beat broke through to mainstream success. African American artists broke through to the mainstream. Latin music found a forum in new markets. Working DJs pulled records from a variety of danceable genres—which had polarized the disenfranchised—and created welcoming and multicultural stomping grounds where people could be themselves away from the judgment of mainstream society. Mixing elements of funk, samba, soul, and leaving no stone unturned in search of a beat, DJs blurred the strict line of culture at the edge of the dance floor.

Some musicians found the loose restrictions on dance music to be an opportunity to experiment with electronic music. On the outskirts of the emerging and extremely commercial market, Cowley became a producer in a producers' genre. He went on to make extended use of a new instrument that changed the shape of music in many genres: the electronic keyboard. Keyboards available by the early '70s were

singles. Cowley's first loops were severely analog, assembled on tape machines, with Scotch tape splicing the sounds together. The effect of these rhythmic squawks and blips was often a space age sound with a furious pace interrupted by moments of space-age ambience.

Like many musicians interested in electronic and ambient music, Cowley was informed by the cold, synthesized ambience of Giorgio Moroder. Moroder was a pioneer in dance music and soundtrack production. Moroder won an Academy Award for his somber electronic soundtrack to the grim 1978 film *Midnight Express*. The controversially not-tough score to Brian dePalma's *Scarface* (1983), including the montage standard "Push It to the Limit," is also among the long list of '80s movies Moroder put his electronic stamp on. Stars such as David Bowie, Donna Summer, and Blondie worked with Moroder, utilizing his space-age sounds to create an alien landscape for their talents. Blondie's slow-grind "Heart of Glass" beat became iconic for the selling out of punk rock. Dance

If you were in town and wanted to party, it was likely you were heading for The Castro. If you possessed bigoted tendencies, you would be run out of The Castro. Celebrities and regulars partied into the early morning hours.

Cowley lived in a cheap apartment among the all-night discos and nightclubs where an endless array of performers and club regulars spent their free time. Cowley would produce in his apartment crammed with keyboards, busted machines, and loose wires during the afternoon and then join the late-night crowd. Hanging around The Castro scene is where Cowley encountered one of his biggest collaborators.

Trained in a Watts-based church choir, Sylvester moved to San Francisco where a scene for underground dance music was emerging. He distinguished himself during a stint in the legendary drag group The Cockettes. His act mimicked the style of early blues women like Josephine Baker and Billie Holiday. Sylvester's performances lacked the camp value popular in drag

During Cowley's short career, he released electrocuted versions of rock'n'roll, morose electronic masterpieces, and quality pornographic soundtracks.



archaically simple compared to the modern keyboard: an instrument that often took the form of bulky wooden furniture meant to replace the piano in the home. While the factory-direct keyboards were extremely limited musical instruments, Cowley was not afraid to pull apart a keyboard and wire it back in novel ways to obtain a specific sound. His library of electronic bleeps and mishaps were fused with heavy bass lines and drum breaks, pushing dance music beyond the speed of funk. Cowley was an analog innovator using "misplaced" wires and tape machines to construct beats and melodies that came across as otherworldly.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., Cowley played drums in local bands and studied English in his hometown until the call of freedom—in the form of an opportunity to study keyboards at City College of San Francisco—drew him to California in 1971. Using electric keyboards in pop music was a fairly new phenomenon. The loose curriculum at City College allowed Cowley to focus his studies primarily on electronic music. He also worked in the checkout cage for the A.V. equipment at the college, giving him unlimited access to the school's instruments and editing equipment.

Cowley created keyboard loops and ominous tones that would eventually contribute to the new electronic sounds in music. He spent hours connecting wires and tape machines, looking for sounds that would inform his otherworldly dance

music with dark sounds arranged in movable beats were arriving and quickly being accepted in the funk-infused dance clubs springing up across the nation.

Cowley took Moroder's danceable style as an inspiration for a new style of dance music he unwittingly helped create: Hi-NRG. Cowley's extended remixes were among the types that wouldn't quit, creating long dance sessions and standing out among the funk classics that made up the average disco playlist.

While major cities like New York and San Francisco had thriving dance scenes where nightclubs employed seasoned, forward-thinking DJs, mainstream America was being introduced en masse to the exploding disco market. After the release of the 1977 film *Saturday Night Fever*, the disco fad had a meteoric rise. Nightclubs across the country popped up anywhere a dance floor and a bar could be erected. During this brief moment, and on a surprisingly large scale, disco's melting pot dance floor reached a wider audience by unwittingly crossing tense racial lines and creating a place for groups oppressed by bigotry to feel at home.

The unified club scenes gave voice to communities largely ignored and unorganized, even in large cities. If there was one example of a scene where this all worked harmoniously, it was in San Francisco's Castro District: a microcosm for how the world could come together through music.

shows at the time, making him stand out among The Castro regulars. His segments of nostalgia for the golden age of jazz quickly became popular segments of the troupe's variety show.

After leaving The Cockettes, Sylvester auditioned a variety of combinations of musicians. This culminated most successfully into his rock-tinged blues/soul act Sylvester And The Hot Band. The band had a reputation as a fiery live act, but it was evidently hard to bottle. The band released two albums between 1972-1974 and toured regularly to little praise. The two albums were largely unsuccessful. The touring mostly enabled the band to barely stay afloat financially. Sylvester traveled the country for two years, including places where it was dangerous for the cross-dressing singer to appear. These were rough years, but they helped cement the backbone of a seasoned performer. By the time Sylvester approached his solo career, he had few doubts about what he wanted from a band and himself.

As a solo artist, Sylvester became a legend and a star around The Castro. His unique repertoire was well known and he found regular work in a growing club scene. Sylvester was drawn to Cowley's keyboard innovations. The two clicked and Cowley joined Sylvester's touring band as a keyboardist.

The two enjoyed their longest stretch of success as collaborators on the album *Step II*. Sylvester's signature hit, "You Make Me Feel

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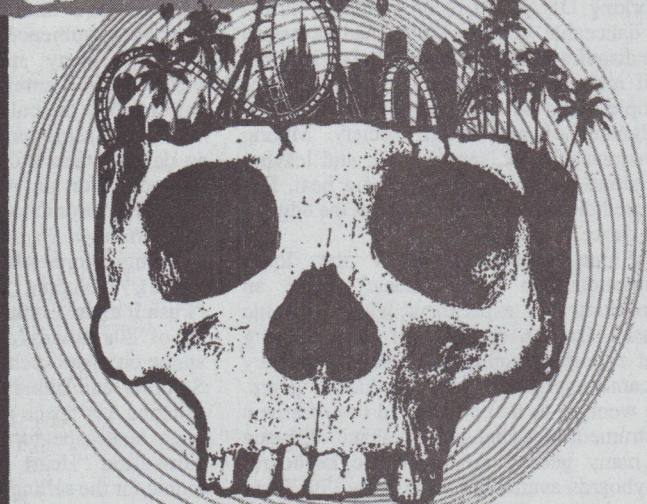
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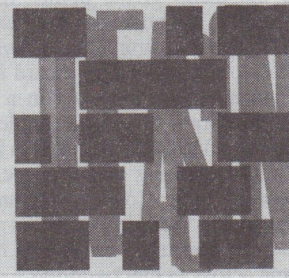
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Cowley was an analog innovator using “misplaced” wires and tape machines to construct beats and melodies that came across as otherworldly.

(Mighty Real)” was created with Cowley in the production booth. The mechanical and ethereal keyboard experimentation hangs over hyper-funk bass and drum tracks. It was infectious and became the sound to replicate. The collision of Cowley’s unusual sounds and the hyper-speed funk speed became more popular and eventually gained him the highest success as a producer for the rising disco singer—his records featured in dance clubs all over the world. “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)” became a big hit on the Hi-NRG scene with Cowley producing and Sylvester on vocals. The song reached number eight on the U.K. singles chart and was number one on the Dance/Disco chart in America.

Sylvester’s seasoned performances were infections and the two were unstoppable as a team for a short while. “Do You Wanna Funk?” also tore up the dance charts with an increasing pace and harder-edged double entendre that made the dance floor move. “Do You Wanna Funk?” made it into the Eddie Murphy film *Trading Places* (1983). The sound culminated into a new high-velocity dance genre called Hi-NRG that became a staple in dance clubs in the early 1980s. Cowley went on to produce several hits in the genre, including several of Sylvester’s singles.

During a baseball game on July 12, 1979, at Comiskey Park in Chicago, an Illinois radio DJ named Steve Dahl staged what was thought to be a benign publicity stunt. Dahl encouraged people to bring a disco record to the game and set it on fire. Patrons showed up with armloads of records to burn. Individuals running on to the field throwing records quickly got out of control. Police were called and the game had to be stopped due to the frenzy. The event helped bring the popular phrase “Disco Sucks” into the mainstream. Disco was already flailing by 1979, and Dahl’s publicity stunt helped disco become a dirty word. The backlash against the genre was massive. If the Comiskey Park event was directly meant to employ anti-gay sentiments or not, the underlying tone was to return to the macho lifestyle of beer and rock’n’roll. It was an easy sell. The country had quickly grown as tired of disco as it had of hula hoops and yo-yos. Disco records, including forty-five million copies of the soundtrack to *Saturday Night Fever*, a record that remains one of the best-selling albums of all time (forty-five million copies), began to languish in American closets.

To be fair, a natural backlash against disco was likely inevitable. Intellectual circles may also have felt tricked and/or

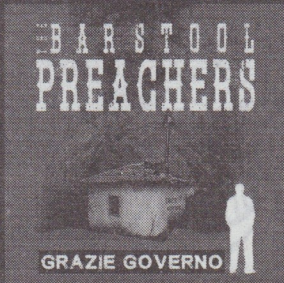
betrayed by the meteoric rise of disco as much as the beer and rock crowd hated the genre for its repetitive, narcissistic, and artificial qualities. It’s largely remembered as a fad and a soulless genre: a crown jewel of the bland, self-obsessed age of early-’70s pop culture. Disco became passé by the time existing artists were choking the market with novelty disco records, obscuring the disco artists who maintained some integrity in producing dance music. The death of disco left many artists scrambling to stay relevant and helped to re-segregate music in the ’80s. The Comiskey Park event is remembered as a watermark for the disco’s death. But hardcore dance clubs around the world were not in and out with the trends. And as dance music evolved, so did the sounds of what people danced to.

The high-speed, alien rock Cowley helped define was not suffering from disco’s quick death. Dance music was getting faster with louder bass lines and ethereal injections of space-age noise. The Hi-NRG genre was the successor to funk on the dance floor, and Cowley was among the creators of its blueprint. Established dance nightclubs in large cities that were able to survive the fad of disco could still keep a line of patrons around the block. Cowley’s solo minor club hit “Menergy” became a standard for defining

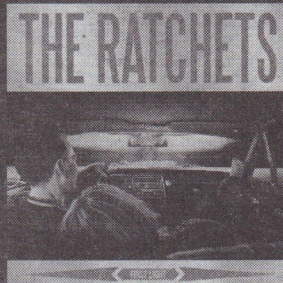
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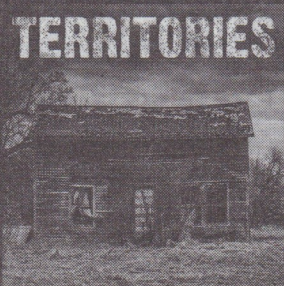
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During this brief moment, and on a surprisingly large scale, disco's melting pot dance floor reached a wider audience by unwittingly crossing tense racial lines and creating a place for groups oppressed by bigotry to feel at home.



Hi-NRG and spent two weeks on the Disco/Dance chart in 1981.

In the early '80s a variety of electronic production seeped into the club scenes. John Water's famous muse and female impersonator Divine had several hit singles and made a living between films traveling the world doing club performances. Divine's double entendre-laced titles were mostly framed with cheap Hi-NRG beats that allowed Divine's unique point of view to shine. Hi-NRG was becoming a standard on the dance floors of clubs around the world.

Synth pop was also taking shape. Bands like Yazoo with their hit "Don't Go" and Bronski Beat's "Smalltown Boy" had songs appearing on DJ turntables while also breaking through to mainstream radio success. While the soft side of the keyboard was making waves in popular music, Devo were utilizing the keyboard in their unique way as a punk weapon. The Screamers' double keyboard attack created angry chaos during their reign as a mainstay in the early L.A. punk scene. After the death of Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis, the members of Joy Division formed New Order and consoled themselves by experimenting with the keyboard. New Order produced one of the more recognizable songs to be deemed Hi-NRG: "Blue Monday." The song does double duty as a club staple and goth anthem. The keyboard as a primary focus found a place in both popular and underground music: not just as a stock instrument, but as a versatile tool that could be augmented and modified to make smooth sounds or horrible, controlled noise. Cowley's influence was spreading in the industry and the underground.

Cowley formed Megatone Records in 1981 with his friend Marty Blecman. Megatone became a forum for Cowley's music and a place to release singles by up and coming artists he had produced. Megatone represented what was going on in the San Francisco club scene and was a popular export for the city. Sylvester's reputation as a performer and Cowley's new sound was a collaboration that kept the two afloat financially, touring the world with Sylvester in the spotlight and Cowley on keyboards.

Cowley was experiencing an unprecedented balance between his artistic career and financial stability as a musician until he was pulled unexpectedly from an '81 European tour with Sylvester due to a mysterious illness with flu-like symptoms. He was sent back to America with pneumonia. Twice misdiagnosed, Cowley was chronically unwell for months and doctors were clueless as to why. Cowley had to give up touring in his final months, but never gave up on his music. He recorded his most powerful record while the Reagan administration ignored the public health crisis affecting thousands of Americans.

Cowley tragically became an early victim of the emerging AIDS crisis, recognized to be among the first group to suffer before the disease even had an official name. Being among the first wave of people to die of the disease, Cowley suffered a debilitating death in 1982. AIDS not only sadly claimed Cowley's life, but eventually the lives of a large segment of the Megatone Records roster, including co-founder Marty Blecman, who succumbed in 1992.

Mind Warp was the third and final full-length album released in Cowley's lifetime and infuses elements of his myriad of dance tracks with spacey interludes. *Mind Warp* is his auteur masterpiece. It has been said in interviews with friends that his state of mind—weathering the uncertain toll of AIDS—drove him during the making of the album. The album would become a symbol of the struggle and suffering against the then-unknown disease. The album is also remembered as an electronic masterpiece by fans of electronic music, mixing speed and ambiance in a space travel frame.

Finding a cure for AIDS and discovering how to control its spread was not a priority for the government. Sylvester succumbed to AIDS in 1988. In the six years between their deaths, little progress was made in terms of a cure, giving hope for survival, or funding for medical research.

Cowley's electronic innovations and speeding up of dance beats became a standard in the ensuing Hi-NRG style that became the soundtrack to the serious dance clubs of the '80s and early '90s. Hi-NRG became popular

worldwide, returning nightclubs back into underground phenomena. Cowley also found much work composing for pornography. Cowley's film soundtracks have been recently reissued and show a proclivity for scoring film. Here he was an innovator, strongly capturing the feeling of walking too close to the curtain in the back of the video store. Although it's indicated he may have done this purely for the money, the recordings are hauntingly naughty and capture the essence of the twinge of privacy that made video store pornography exciting in the '80s.

His success as a musician and producer came with few accolades at a time when experimenting with electronic dance music found few safe spaces other than in studios and dance clubs of '70s. Outside of his dance music peers, many groundbreaking electronic artists cite Cowley as a major influence. His experimentation with keyboards and analog electronics made him a pioneer in electronic dance music. For those not interested in dance music, there is still a lot to explore in his catalogue, as his longer-form music is being unearthed and released.

Suggested Listening:

Patrick Cowley, *Mind Warp*, Megatone m-1004, 1982.
Patrick Cowley, *Muscle Up*, Dark Entries, DE 106, 2015.
Patrick Cowley, *School Daze*, Dark Entries, DE 052, 2015.
Sylvester, "Do You Wanna Funk?", Megatone MT-102, 1982.

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TOP 5s

Art Ettinger

- Clown Sounds, *Preacher Maker* LP
- Various Artists, *Tribute to the Wretched Ones* LP
- ANTiSEEN, *The Dying Breed* 12" EP
- City Mouse / Murderburgers, *Split 7"*
- *No War No KKK No Fascist USA: A Short History of MDC's Radical Rock* by David A. Ensminger (book)

Chad Williams

- Night Birds, *Roll Credits* 12"
- Thee Evil Twin, *Pyrmont 7"*
- Sick Of It All, *Wake the Sleeping Dragon!* LP
- Charger, Self-titled EP
- Tragedy, *Fury* 12"

Chris Mason

1. Rubble, Self-titled LP
2. Culture Abuse, *Bay Dream* LP
3. Color TV, Self-titled LP
4. Night Birds, *Roll Credits* LP
5. C.H.E.W., *Feeding Frenzy* LP

Chris Terry

- Brown Sugar, *Long Strange Drip* LP
- IV, Self-titled 7"
- (As always) D'Angelo, *Voodoo LP*
- *Upgrade Soul*, by Ezra Clayton Daniels (graphic novel)
- *Rhode Island Red*, by Charlotte Carter (novel)

Craven Rock

1. After much stress and fear, my partner's aggressive top surgery going well. (If you and your partner are experiencing this, it's going to be *okay*. Feel free to pick my brain. You're not alone.)

2. All the work antifascists put in to making Unite The Right 2 the humiliation it was for fascist peckerwoods. Rest in power, Heather Heyer.
3. *Poet in New York* by Federico Garcia Lorca (book)
4. *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg (book)
5. Learning of and implementing a bullet journal.

Cynthia Pinedo

- 5 *Great Moments in 2018*
1. Backstage at Jawbreaker and seeing them play several nights in a row.
2. Driving around Palm Springs blasting the Mean Jeans *Jingles* album.
3. Driving my car through a redwood tree in Eureka.
4. Rock n' Roll Camp for Girls Los Angeles.
5. The UCLA punk conference.

Designated Dale

1. Nine years married to Yvonne 10/10/2018. Love that incredible lady more than she'll ever know.
2. Ramones, *Road to Ruin* (40th Anniversary Deluxe Edition). Producer Ed Stasium busts out some fantabulous alternate mixes and rough takes from the homies' fourth album from 1978.
3. *MC5: A True Testimonial*. Incredible film documentary featuring one of the biggest unsung rock'n'roll bands.
4. *Big Mouth* series on Netflix. Those who *aren't* fans of cringe-worthy humor need not apply. You'll never look at developing hormones the same way again.

5. Molotov, *MTV Unplugged: El Desconecte*. Heavy duty collection from one of the heaviest bands to travel the globe, showcasing a grip of their tunes semi-acoustic style with some of their guest pals. Check out these cats live, if you haven't already.

Daryl Gussin

- Breakfast In Silence, *It's Hard to Be Open Minded When You Wanna Die*, and live
- Clown Sounds, *Preacher Maker* LP
- Black Dots, *Everything Has Got to Change*
- Neighborhood Brats, *Claw Marks*, tie with Night Birds, *Roll Credits*
- Flag Of Democracy, *No School, No Core* tie with Tragedy, *Fury*

Eric Baskauskas

- Top 5 Things about Recording Your Band's Demo at a Show
1. It's cheap or free. Buy the sound guy a beer and don't forget to bring a flash drive!
2. It's real. One take is all you get!
3. The drummer always plays faster live!
4. No madness-inducing studio time!
5. It sounds like shit, just the way it should be!

Jennifer Federico

- Top 5 Awesome Records I've Recently Been Introduced to
- Ooga Boogas, *Romance and Adventure*
- Penetration, *The Early Years*
- Sea Lilies, *Soonest*
- The Taxpayers, *Big Delusion Factory*
- Tommy And The Commies, *Here Come...*

Jimmy Alvarado

- Five Random Cover Songs I Think Are Nifty
- Riistetyt, "Haluun Kuolemaan" (CH3)
- Cyndi Lauper, "Money Changes Everything" (The Brains)
- Neil, "My White Bicycle" (Tomorrow)
- Clash, "Armageddon Time" (Willie Williams)
- Seasick, "Wound Up" (Black Flag)

Kayla Greet

- Top 5 Things I Did in NYC
- Visited Albert's Garden, Arturo Vega's loft, Joey Ramone Place, and what was once CBGB's
- Ate pizza and talked about Bauhaus with some punks outside C-Squat b/w the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space
- Met an original Club Kid and hung out at Double Down Saloon
- Rode a roller coaster at Coney Island, but missed the freak show
- The Lower East Side in general: egg creams from Gem Spa, St. Mark's Place, Search and Destroy, Tompkins Square Park

Kevin Dunn

1. Choke The Pope, *Who Cares*
2. TV On The Radio, *Seeds*
3. Shonen Knife, *Adventure*
4. Dott, *Heart Swell*
5. Mike Faloon, *The Other Night at Quinn's* (book)

Kurt Morris

1. Pig Destroyer, *Head Cage*
2. Gouge Away, *Burnt Sugar*
3. Super Unison, *Stella*
4. Wild Animals, *The Hoax*
5. Silver Jews, *American Water*

Martin Wong

- Joan Jett, Cheap Trick, and Dole Whip at the L.A. County Fair.
- *Project Gutenberg* with Chow Yun-Fat and Mandy co-written

*Sounds like shit,
just the way it should be!*

by Aaron Stewart Ahn on the big screen.

- Ed Lin's Taipei Night Market novels and The Linda Lindas opening for his *99 Ways to Die* book release talk at Vroman's.
- Save Music in Chinatown 16 with Phranc, Ford Madox Ford, The Horseheads, LP3 & The Tragedy, and The Linda Lindas.
- Latest records by Adolescents, Alpine Decline, Birdstriking, Calvin Johnson, Chui Wan, Escape-ism...

Mike Bruno

- Travis Scott, *Astroworld*
- Vacation, *Mouth Sounds* LP
- Radon, *More of Their Lies* LP
- Culture Abuse, *Bay Dream* LP
- You Blockhead, live in Cincinnati at NSYC, 9/17

Mike Faloan

1. Daniel Nester, *Shader* (book)
2. Hamish Kilgour, *Finklestein* LP
3. Roy Montgomery, *R M H Q: Headquarters 4 x CD*
4. Keith Rosson, *Smoke City* (book)
5. Jasmine Dreame Wagner, *On a Clear Day* (book)

Mike Fournier

- Look Back and Laugh: *Journal Comics* by Liz Prince
- Spowder, *Health Palm* LP
- Joe Gross's 33 1/3 installment on Fugazi's *In on the Kill Taker*
- Notches, Me In Capris, Pushflowers, Squitch at Charlie's Kitchen, Cambridge, Mass., 8/27/18 (w/Ed and Gina & Scott)
- *Minor Leagues* #6

Mike Frame

- Stiff Love, entire catalog
- Turn It Around: *East Bay Punk Documentary*
- Odd Numbers, *The Odyssey*
- Terry & Louie, ...a Thousand Guitars
- Rocky Horror Picture Show in Rapid City

DJ Naked Rob

Radio Valencia 87.9FM | SFCA

1. Les Lullies, Self-titled LP / French trash punk

2. Netherlands, *Black Gaia* LP / NYC noise rock
3. Super Thief, Self-titled CD/LP / ATX noise punk
4. The Primals, *All Love Is True Love* LP / L.A. heavy pop rock
5. The Blankz, *I'm a Gun 7"* / Phoenix punk rock

Nighthawk

- Arctic Flowers and Dark Thoughts, live
- Billy Joel, live
- The Bananas and Rivers Edge, live
- MDC, live
- Having three driving jobs

Ollie Miske

- Bat Fangs, Self-titled
- Breeders, *All Nerve*
- Lemuria, *Recreational Hate*
- Neko Case, *Hell-On*
- Speedy Ortiz, *Twerp Verse*

Rene Navarro

1. Spiritualized performing at the Orpheum Theatre with thirty-one musicians onstage including strings, horns, and a choir.
2. Julio César Chávez vs. Meldrick Taylor
3. *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
4. Helping Dan from Pedal Strike rescue a baby bird.
5. Khabib "Eagle" Nurmagomedov

Rev. Nørð

- Ramones, *Road to Ruin 40th Anniversary Edition* box set
- Prisstevens, *Demos & Rarities Vols. 1 & 2* CS
- Stimulators, *Loud Fast Rules 7"* EP
- Mike Faloan, *The Other Night at Quinn's* (book)
- Lachlan MacKinnon, *Let Me Tell You a Story* (book)

Rich Cocksedge

- Samiam, live 30th Anniversary Tour at Bi Nu, Berlin 10/8/2018
- Natterers, *Head in Threatening Attitude* LP
- Tight Night, *Volume* CD
- Tozcos, *Sueños Deceptivos* LP
- Night Birds, *Roll Credits 12"* EP

Rick V.

Records I Bought and Shipped to Myself While in California but Were Lost in the Mail

1. Spokenest, *We Move*
2. Rubinoos, *Party of Two*
3. Various Artists, *Chart Attack* (awesome cover art)
4. Clown Sounds, *Preacher Maker*
5. Johnny And The Badboys, *Fed Ex Sucks*

Ryan Nichols

1. Terminal A, Actors, and Soft Kill at the Echo
2. Roky Erickson at Marty's On Newport
3. The Scientists at Zebulon
4. Girl Tears
5. *The Primal Screamer* by Nick Blinko (book)

Sal Lucci

1. Tommy And The Commies, *Here Come... LP*
2. Ruler, "Jeannie Jeannie Jeannie" b/w *(It's Not) Saturday Night 7"*
3. Gino And The Goons, *She Was Crushed* EP
4. Rocket 808, "Digital Billboards" b/w "Mystery Train 7"
5. Scientists, live at Beerland, Austin, TX, 10/5/2018

Sean Arenas

- Exmaid, *Fair Sex* LP
- Lötftett / [...], *Split 7"*
- Short, *Fast & Loud* issue #30
- Wolfman's Got Nards documentary
- Orthodox, *Baal* CD

Sean Koepenick

Heavy Rotation

1. Report Suspicious Activity, *The Wilderness 7"*
2. The Proletariat, *The Murder of Alton Sterling 7"*
3. Peter Hook, *Substance: Inside New Order* (book)
4. Charles Bukowski, *The Mathematics of the Breath and the Way: On Writers and Writing*
5. Joe Eszterhas, *Hollywood Animal*

Simone Carter

Top Five (Non-Dirtnap) Denton Punk Bands

- Reliant K2
- Echo Spring
- Razorbumps
- Whep
- The Noids

Steve Adamyk

- Tommy And The Commies, *Here Come...*
- Sore Points, Self-titled LP
- Priors, *New Pleasure*
- Condor, *Cassingle #2*
- Outtacontroller, *No Echo* EP

Tim Brooks

- Ripcord, *Harvest Hardcore* EP
- Spiritual Cramp, *Television* LP
- Coupe Gorge, *Troubles 12"*
- Bootlicker, *Who Do You Serve* EP
- Crown Court, *Mad in England* EP

Toby Tober

Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed

1. *Sorry to Bother You*
2. *The Last Movie Star*
3. *Three Identical Strangers*
4. *Bad Reputation*
5. *Skate Kitchen*

Todd Taylor

- Tommy And The Commies, *Here Come... 12"*
- Black Dots, *Everything Has Got to Change*
- Neighborhood Brats, *Claw Marks* LP
- Night Birds, *Roll Credits 12"*
- Tragedy, *Fury 12"*
- Flag Of Democracy, *No School, No Core* LP
- Outlaw Culture: *Resisting Representations*, bell hooks (book)

Ty Stranglehold

1. Night Birds, *Roll Credits*
2. Neighborhood Brats, *Claw Marks*
3. Bad Sports, *Constant Stimulation*
4. Clown Sounds, *Preacher Maker*
5. Shannon Shaw, *Shannon in Nashville*



1984:

W Hoidzie Fanatykom Marszu: LP

Absolutely fantastic reissue of early recordings from this cold wave band that was active in Poland in the mid-to-late '80s. Comparisons to the Red Wave bands (Kino, et cetera) are impossible to ignore, as 1984 were probably working with the same influences and source material, though the guitars here are more prominent and this feels much more organic due to the fact that the songs were all recorded live. I don't want that to dissuade anyone reading this who doesn't like live recordings, as the sound is clear and the mix is very well balanced. In fact, I listened to this twice before I even read the description and didn't even notice that it was live. If you are into the *Minimal Wave* comps or have even a passing interest in dark wave/cold wave, then this is essential listening from both a historical perspective as well as an aesthetic perspective. Highest recommendations. —Ian Wise (Pasazer)

ABORTED TORTOISE: An Beach: LP

Sometimes a band thrives in spite of a truly wretched name, and, well, Aborted Tortoise is one of those bands. Swaggering, fuzzed-out garage stuff that isn't afraid to go knee-deep in Dick Dale-esque surf waters, or rapid fire, forty-second blasts of hardcore. Confident as hell, and surprising: there's a decent amount of moving parts here, and between the disparate elements (the album cover, the band name, the surf/garage/hardcore amalgam), it shouldn't necessarily work, but it does. Pretty dang good. —Keith Rosson (Bachelor)

ABRISS: Dachlattenkult: LP

It doesn't seem that long since the last Abriss album came out—less than eighteen months actually—but I'm not complaining. The band manages to cram nineteen songs onto one side of vinyl, which should hint at the brevity of the individual tracks which average out at around a minute each. It's gruff, rough and ready, yet tight as fuck, keeping a brisk momentum up throughout. If anything, this is a bit better than the band's self-titled debut. Definitely worth checking out. —Rich Cocksedge (Twisted Chords)

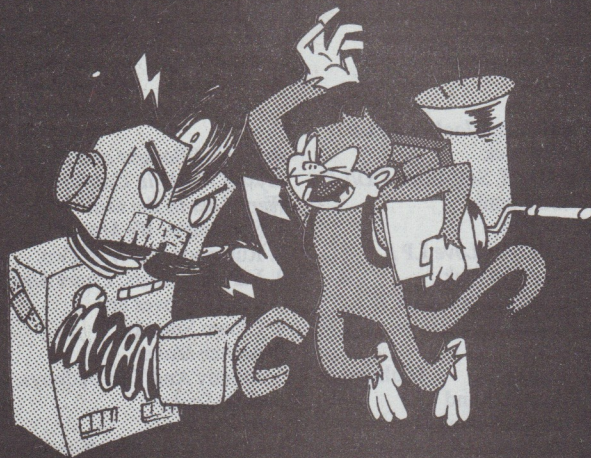
ACTIVE MINDS / LOS REZIOS: Split 7"

Excellent split record from the political, crust/anarcho vets Active Minds, playing precisely what you'd expect. The flip is a Peruvian band, Los Rezos, doing some gruffer, more traditional d-beat tunes in true form. Those familiar with the label will know what they're getting into, and anyone else, including Europeans who are into this genre, would surely have positive things to say. Always exciting to see international bands on American labels. —Steve Adamyk (SPHC)

ADOLESCENTS: Cropduster: LP

This is an incredibly hard review to write. As I am sure you are aware,

RECORD REVIEWS



Yo, who wants to give me the Night Birds dagger tattoo? I'm on board for life.

—Juan Espinosa

Night Birds, Roll Credits LP

legendary Adolescents bass player Steve Soto passed away just prior to the release of this album. Will this be the final Adolescents album? Only time will tell, but I do know that if it is, it is a fine way to cap off an extraordinary band. In the modern era of punk rock, we have seen many of the original bands get back together in varying capacities, but none have been more prolific and continuously great than the Adolescents. Since their return with 2005's *OC Confidential*, the band released five more albums bursting with songs both well written and incredibly topical. How can you call it a reunion act when they have consistently shown that they are better now than they were in their heyday? That is a bold statement and you should know I make it seriously. I consider them to be the best band to come out of Southern California during that era. *Cropduster* is taking our current situation to task. Vitriol has never been so easy to sing along with, and if there was any doubt who the main target is, look no further than the cover art depicting Forty-five literally cropdusting a crowd of Americans. This album is the Adolescents at their finest. Rest in Peace, Steve. Thank you for leaving us with one more amazing album. —Ty Stranglehold (Concrete Jungle)

ALIANS: Mega Yoga: LP

I really believe in keeping history alive; if we don't document what was past how can we learn for the future? This band was one of the pioneers of the Polish '90s scene, when getting music out to the world was at best difficult, at worst impossible. This band sounds like the shit I would hear at free festivals in the '80s—

punk mixed with reggae and ska. I'd bet my months wages there's at least two people in this band with dreads. I believe records like this should exist as a historical document of a scene where it was near impossible to put out records. Will I ever listen to it again? No. —Tim Brooks (Pasazer)

ARCTIC FLOWERS:

Straight to the Hunter: LP

I have been a fan of Portland, Ore.'s Arctic Flowers for quite some time now (I want to say it was 2010 when I saw them play in a warehouse in Austin, Texas at 4 AM—I was instantly hooked). It was my first realization that I really like post-punk. I mean, as a kid in the '80s bands like The Cure and Joy Division were always around in the punk circles I travelled in, but it was always periphery music to me. Arctic Flowers opened me up to other stuff that was going on now. Cat Party, Nervosas, Lunch, The Nervous, Red Dons, and Criminal Code—all really amazing bands. I guess you're never too old to branch out! Anyway, *Straight to the Hunter* is AF's third full-length album and they continue their running streak of amazing releases. As I play this over and over, the words that keep appearing in my brain are "beautiful intensity." This record is heavy yet has a way of relaxing me. They have a knack for building up the tension in a song, then throwing a stop in just the right place before everything explodes. It gives me chills every time. This is a self-released effort by the band and I don't imagine they will hang around for very long, so I'd jump on a copy as soon as possible. —Ty Stranglehold (Self-released)

ARMADA, LA:

Anti-Colonial Vol. 1: CD/LP

La Armada is one of the hardest working bands in recent memory. Formed in 2001 in the Dominican Republic, for the last decade the quintet has made Chicago the homebase for their relentless touring and recording schedule. Their most recent release, *Anti-Colonial Vol. 1*, not only captures everything I've come to know and love about the band, but also marks a new direction for them. Long-time fans have come to expect an album of furious metallic riffs, nuanced song writing, and every member's brilliant musicianship, of which La Armada more than deliver. The record manages to capture all the raw intensity of the band's live performances. Where things take a different turn, is in terms of lyrics, with *Anti-Colonial Vol. 1* marking the first time, to my knowledge, that the band has written songs in English. The raw anti-capitalist lyrics of past releases are still present, but in a language that will reach a wider audience. I applaud the band for making this bold step, after previously having only written songs in their native Spanish, and I feel that with the vitalness of their message, and the anthemic delivery of their message, the band have more than succeeded in this transition. Catch the band on tour when they roll through your town and be sure to grab this record. —Paul J. Comeau (armadahardcore.com)

AUTOGRAMM:

What R U Waiting 4?: LP

I was a child of the early '80s and as such I have an unabashed love of many of the radio hits of the era. In particular, I was an instant fan of anything in the synth-soaked "new wave" pop and rock genre. Devo, Men At Work and The Cars still rate as some of my favorite bands. Autogramm encapsulates those bands exquisitely. It doesn't sound like they are a modern band with an '80s schtick at all. If this just came on without me knowing anything about it, I would swear it was released in 1983. The song writing, the pacing, and of course the sound, all scream skinny ties and cocaine nervousness. This album makes me so damn happy! This is what I thought punk rock sounded like before I knew what punk rock sounded like, if that makes any sense at all. If any of the jumble of words above jumps out at you, you really should check out Autogramm. Oh yeah. Hand claps! There are fucking hand claps! I love this so much! —Ty Stranglehold (Nevado)

AWFUL KANAWFUL:

Clam's Cassino: LP

Talented and ambitious (there's two red alerts right there), these guys, whether intentionally or unintentionally, sound like some shockingly mutated strain of late '60s/early '70s radio pop, sprayed with so many structural and musical

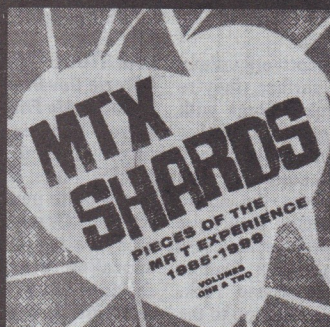
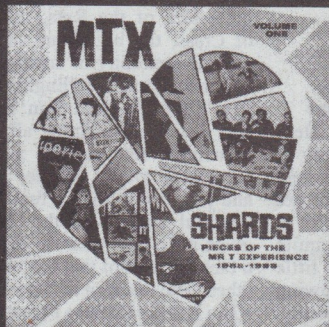


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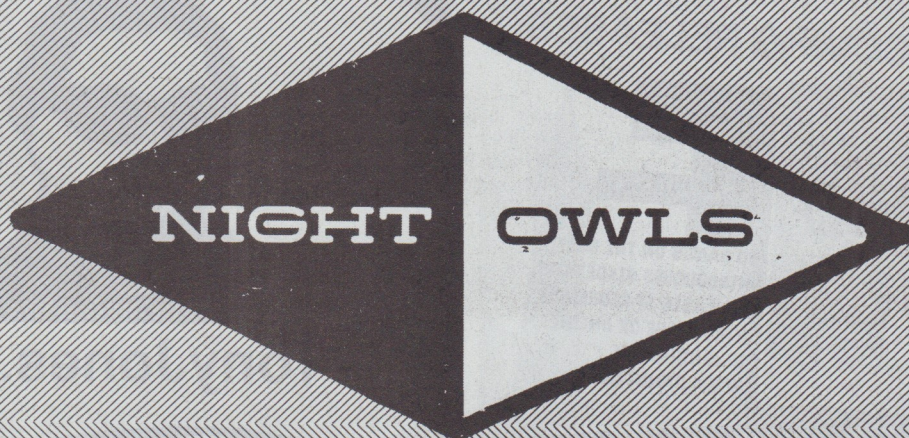
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left turns that it is quite unnecessary for them to come out and say "WE COULD BE PLAYING JAZZ RIGHT NOW YOU KNOW" as the music just about shouts it into your hearing aid for you. As a result, we get the cloying aspects of pop music, coupled with the why-the-fuck-are-you-trying-my-patience-like-this aspects of art rock. They're not entirely unsuccessful in their attempt to do whatever it is they're trying to do—there are certainly some cool parts to this record, and I appreciate their clutches at greatness—but, overall, they remind me of what a completely undanceable version of Oingo Boingo (i.e., Danny Elfman's ten-piece band, before he got famous doing gimpy movie music) might sound like if O.B.'s recording budget was approximately what one'd pay for a decent plate of pancakes. I'll hate myself for saying this, but I'd like to hear them with, say, Magic Kids money in the studio budget. It might wind up sounding worse, but then we'd know for sure. Stay golden, Ponyboys! Unless you are not currently golden. I can't really tell. **BEST SONG:** I like the "Help" section of "Help/Vanity/Caravan." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Motorwonder." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The first time I heard anyone say "Awful Kanawful" was when some older kids said it to my cousin, when he was trick-or-treating in his Evel Knievel costume in the '70s. —Rev. Nørb (Chocolate Chin)

BAD SHADOWS:

Voices in the Dark: LP

Little bit o' surf, little bit of power pop, a hint of punk, and a whole lotta '60s garage make for some tasty tuneage that sticks to the eardrums. Derivative? Duh, but the songs are well crafted and executed, and they have the sense to eschew the whole "shit-fi" aesthetic that has been beaten into the fucking ground. Thumbs up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Resurrection)

BAD SPORTS:

Constant Stimulation: LP

Bad Sports are a deceptively unique band. Sure, on the surface, they're a trio of Texan punk rockers, with a laundry list of former and other current bands that you should already have in your record collection, but there is a magic about the music these guys create together. They have a knack for being able to seamlessly switch up sounds—from garage punk to straight-up classic rock, from Ramones-influenced pop to the goddamn British Invasion—from song to song and no matter what it is, they nail it perfectly. Of course, everything is filtered through their patented take-no-bullshit attitude. *Constant Stimulation* is the band's fourth LP (I consider 2016's amazing *Living with Secrets* to be more of a mini-album) and without a word of exaggeration, it is my favorite. I play it over and over hearing new cool parts all over the place. Most of the songs here are mid-tempo burners

with impeccable songwriting. Bad Sports are the modern definition of rock'n'roll. As much as I can see a punk rock guy getting way into this (especially if I were to look in a mirror), I could see normal people latching on as well. If it were to happen, maybe there would still be a tiny piece of me that would be pissed about it but, in reality, the adult in me would say, "No shit. They're really that fucking good!" Everyone needs this record in their collection. —Ty Stranglehold (Dirtnap)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS, THE:

"Grazie Governo" / "Warchief" / "Choose My Friends": Flexidiscs

A set of three picture disc flexi records from this band, courtesy of Pirates Press Records. The sound is not quite punk and not quite ska on the "Grazie Governo" flexi; a nice mid-tempo sound that is quite appealing. "Warchief" is a little faster but stays reigned in, showing restraint and songwriting ability. There's more of a melodic street punk type of sound on this one and is likely to appeal to fans of the overall Pirates Press back catalog. "Choose My Friends" has a more poppy sound, finally brings in the ska vibe fully, and is probably my favorite of the three. Interesting to release these all together, as they give a good overview of the sound of the band and the different things they bring together. —Mike Frame (Pirates Press)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS:

Gracie Governo: LP

I don't think anyone needs to live up to what their family has done, but when you are the son of the singer from Cock Sparrer (one of my all-time favorite bands) I am going to be paying attention. This band has been able to take influences from the past forty years of punk and make it their own. You can tell these kids have grown up with this shit: there's the pub rock of Cock Sparrer, the reggae influences of the Ruts, the politics of Crass, the big sound of Rancid, and the mentality of small pubs and basements and the "Englishness" of The 'Tone and Hard Skin. Somehow they managed to throw all of these influences into a pot and make something totally unique, arresting, and *fun*. I am old as fuck, but the youthful energy of this band has given me a new lease on life. This is a fantastic record that has one foot in "then" and one foot in "now." Get. In. —Tim Brooks (Pirates Press)

BELICOSO MINDS: *The Creature: LP*

This LP came out two years ago, but I guess it's just turning up here. Portland is dark and rainy. I guess that rainy darkness somehow created some of the best dark hardcore and punk of the past few decades: Tragedy, Wipers, Dead Moon, and Bellicose Minds. Other Portland natives Sceptres and Estranged took the goth elements of Joy Division et al. and wove it into driving punk.

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Bellicose Minds have dug deeper into the goth sounds of Southern Death Cult and The Mission and have made a true goth record. There is a driving punk feel, but they have delved deep into punk/goth bands like Lack Of Knowledge/A Touch Of Hysteria. It's dark as fuck and good as fuck. —Tim Brooks (Black Water)

BETA BOYS: Late Nite Acts: LP

Wild, sloppy hardcore of the finest order. There's an almost unhinged quality when they speed things up, and when they slow down there are hints at darker, psychedelic influences at work amongst the pummeling, flanged guitars and general raucousness. Their singles hinted at the possibility of an interesting full-length and this delivers in spades. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feel It)

BIALA GORACZKA: Spokoj: 2 x LP

Reissue of this Polish band's 2003 LP, spanning three sides of a double LP. Biała Gorączka play bouncy and anthemic crust punk with clear vocals, spoken word breakdowns, and the occasional ska part. It's a rousing stew of music that makes me want to have a circle pit around some ruins. —Chris Terry (Pasazer)

BIRDCLOUD: Dode: 7"

What to think of this 7" with two women simulating some kind of oral copulation thing while wearing diapers on the cover? Initially, "Man, I'm getting too old for this," and then

"holy fucking hell yes" once the needle hit the groove! I am still on the fence on this Birdcloud business. Either they are the most kick-ass women I have ever seen or a shrewd marketing move. Whatever the case, the A side "Wild Turkey 101" deserves the most attention here, with its obvious subject matter placing the song in the vast pantheon of kick ass songs about whisky. B side "Fiasco" fares only slightly worse off—something about diarrhea or something or another—if I am not mistaken. Oh, and upon closer inspection that oral copulation gag seems to be a Neil Young-style harmonica thingy worn way down low. —Garrett Barnwell (Bachelor)

BLACK PAW: Self-titled: 7" EP

Ex-Rumspringer dude(s) involved and, right as rain, you get pop punk complexly structured 'n' textured, thoughtful, intelligent, and blessed with the uncanny ability to earworm and not let up until the next song comes on to do the same. Excellence from start to finish. Hope more is in the works from 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Night Animal)

BLANKZ, THE:

(I Just Want To) Slam: CDEP

Well, I haven't seen a new CD single in a while. Odd format aside, this is solid poppy, snotty punk. Think Sloppy Seconds and The Sleazies. The production is a little too clean for this style, but these two songs are good and instantly memorable.

Apparently number two in a series of nine singles, I think I'd be much more enthusiastic about this band if I had an LP to listen to instead of a CD single. —Chad Williams (Slope)

BORN A LOT: Wild Constitution: LP

Man, this is a load of grind. I don't actively seek this stuff out much anymore, so I don't know where the standard lay, but this album is vicious by my assessment. It's got hooks without being obnoxiously mathy. The weight is in tons. The blasts set off a fire extinguisher in my building. Loads of d-beats. It's really well produced without the phony crunch and crosses the genre lines without pandering. Bandcamp doesn't mention other releases. First album? Really a band to look out for if you're a devotee of the fifteen minute album. —Billups Allen (Nadine)

BORZOI: A Prayer for War: LP

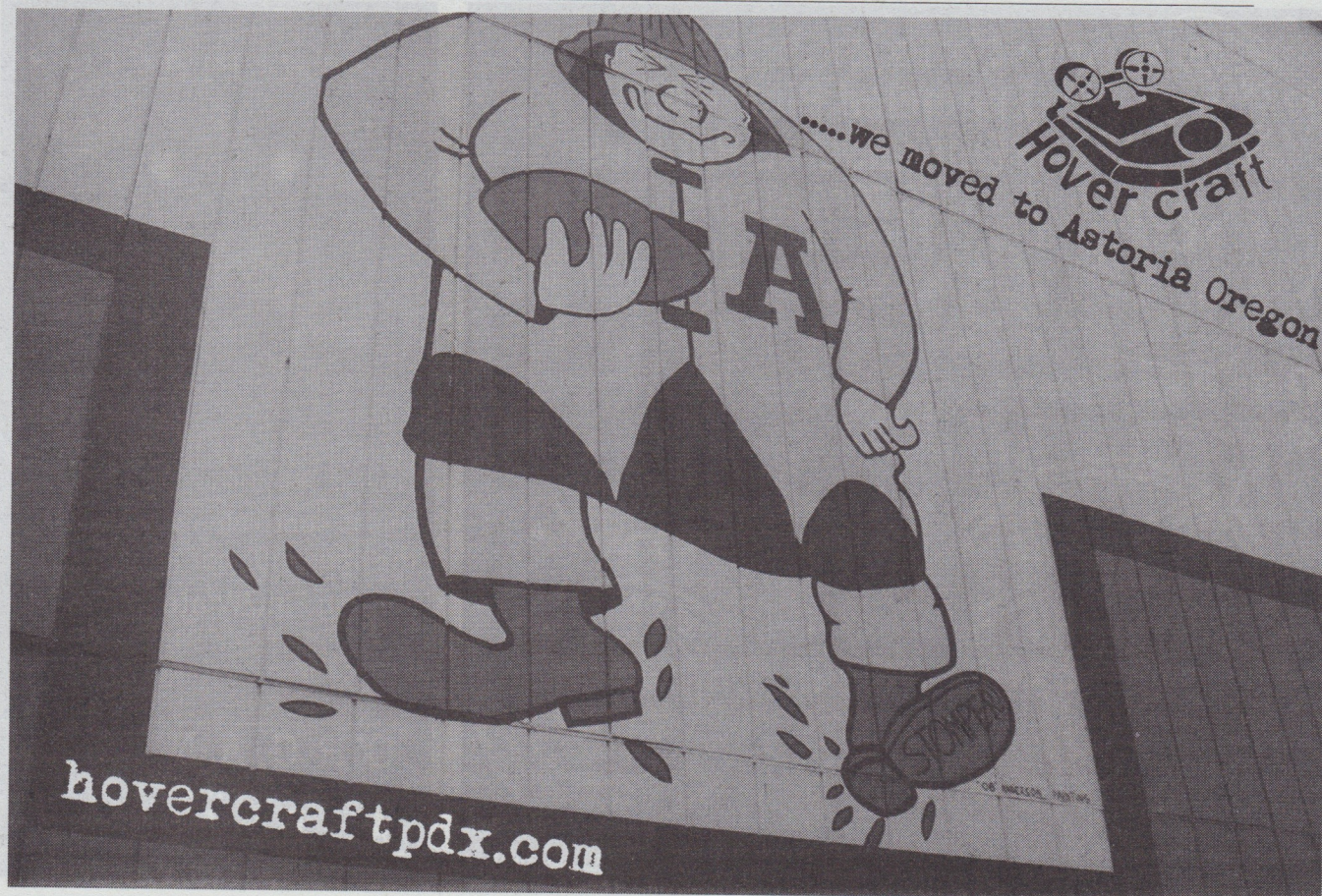
Maybe this sounds like NoMeansNo or maybe this sounds like Rites Of Spring or maybe this is some manner of conceptual descendant of the Fearless Iranians From Hell or maybe this sounds like what half the roster on Alternative Tentacles wishes they sounded like at any given time, but once I realized that it was reminding me of all those "challenging" records from the late '80s like Steel Pole Bathtub or Bomb that I tried to get (I really *did* try) (sorta) but eventually just threw up my hands and gave up on, then I couldn't stop thinking that

the return of the late '80s (non-hair-metal/non-skull-bandana version) was, indeed, what this was. I'm sure this is somebody's favorite record and a brilliant statement on war and the constriction of institutional thought and a million and one other deep, worthy things, but *I am too goddamn old to sit through another five years of the late '80s*. Give this to some kid who doesn't have PTSD. Thanks. BEST SONG: "The Tonsure Twist." BEST SONG TITLE: "Kill the Irish." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Fuck Yog-Sothoth and his all-seeing, all-knowing jealousy of the mighty Borzoi. If not for Yog's infernal meddling, this album would have been in your hands years ago." —Rev. Nørð (12XU)

BROWN SUGAR:

Long Strange Drip: LP

I recently threw on Minor Threat for the first time in over a decade and was surprised by all of the melody lurking under the surface, the tunefulness that I'd tuned out while screaming along as a teenager. Syracuse's Brown Sugar had a similar thing going, getting satisfying results by blending garage rock and '80s hardcore in a sneakily catchy way. These self-described "dummy punks" were a band from 2008-2012, and this record collects all of their singles, demos, and unreleased tracks. The band had an African-American singer, their name references a Black fetish anthem by the Rolling Stones, and their cover



art seems Funkadelic-inspired, so I wish they'd included lyrics, but am pleased with the jams and the heady, self-deprecating liner notes. If only I'd caught these guys while they were around. —Chris Terry (Feral Kid)

BUM OUT: Celebrate with Me, I'm Letting Myself Go: LP

It's not as pervasive as it was a decade or two ago, but anti-emo sentiment still pervades most punk circles, despite renewed interest in progenitor bands like Samiam and Jawbreaker. Fuck that. Emo rules! Bum Out is one of the best contemporary emo bands, bellicosely belting out tragic music as unabashedly as dudes like Pegboy's Larry Damore did before them. Featuring Razorcake's own Mark Twistworthy, this record is one for the ages. It's easily one of my favorite records of the year. Don't miss it! —Art Ettinger (Twistworthy)

CASUAL HEX: Zig Zag Lady Illusion: LP

This record is really fucking cool. Angular in subtle ways; linear drums play between sparse guitar and '70s punk bass that is solid and builds. It's art punk without the pretension. —Candace Hansen (Water Wing)

CEMENT SHOES: A Peace Product of the USA: 7"

This two-song 7" from Richmond's Cement Shoes is an awesome, straightforward, aggressive single. It has a curiously big label feel,

despite the neat silkscreened record sleeve, probably since the production is so slick. That's not a bad thing, as we don't need to hoard great groups like Cement Shoes in the underground. This is the kind of genuine hardcore punk that could reach a pretty damn wide audience if the world were a different place. —Art Ettinger (Self-released)

CHILL PARENTS: Demos: CS

Melodic yet thrashy, Chill Parents are playing pop punk that incorporates electronic music and samples in really interesting ways. If you're a sensitive and smart skateboarder who likes Aye Nako, you'll probably want this in your Fall rotation. —Candace Hansen (chillparents.bandcamp.com)

CHILL PARENTS: Hail ACAB: CS

Okay, wow I love the way that Chill Parent's songwriting and sonic curating has evolved. Still melodic and thrashy like their demos, but *Hail ACAB* is more brooding, vulnerable, and polished in ways that remind me of RVIVR, early Title Fight, and even at times the less ska moments of Leftöver Crack. A standout moment for me is the transition between "Crystal Palace" and "Hold My Head," which blends an iconic prison recording of Angela Davis over sparse drums that build like a call to action—internally and communally—as Davis recalls the sounds of bombs shaking over her childhood home in Birmingham,

Alabama while contemplating the role of violence in black liberation. I love how *Hail ACAB* is put together in a sort of pastiche way, incorporating live performances, demo style recordings, and samples. It's a risky move, but pays off, feeling like an inspired collection. This tape is contemplative, intellectual, and aggressive, without ever being macho or condescending. It also does something rare for politically driven DIY: it maintains a sense of joy even in the dark. Highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (chillparents.bandcamp.com)

CHILLER: Self-titled: 7" EP

One short blast after another of caustic thrash that pummels the noggin and leaves you wanting more. Band is right, taut, to the point. These are the kinda cats you hope your band doesn't have to play after 'cause they set the bar pretty high from start to finish. —Jimmy Alvarado (Chiller, chillerprgh.bandcamp.com)

CITRIC DUMMIES:

The Kids Are Alt-Right: LP

Sloppy, scrappy punk with song titles like "Are You Gonna Flush That" and "I H8 Birds." Songs have a certain catchiness to 'em, the lyrics hint at deeper wit beneath the overt silliness, and I've a feeling their live shows are even more effective at delivering what they're dishing out here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Citric Dummies, lifeissoshorrifying@gmail.com)

CIVILISED SOCIETY?: War in My Head: CDEP

U.K. band Civilised Society? were mainstays of their scene in the late '80s, with a pair of notable releases. Now after nearly thirty years of silence, the band has returned with the *War in My Head* EP, featuring re-recordings of three of their classic tracks, and one brand new recording. While lumped into the punk category—probably for their left-leaning politics—Civilised Society? play ripping thrash metal with riffs that inspire headbanging-induced neck injuries. The band proves that despite a thirty-year absence, they have lost none of their ability to shred. On the title track of the EP, their first new track, the band shows that not only are the musical chops that made them so fantastic in their heyday still strong, but that they've also lost none of their songwriting abilities. With a new album announced as of the time of this writing, this EP is the opening salvo from a band that still has a lot left to say. —Paul J. Comeau (Boss Tuneage)

COACHWHIPS: Night Train: CS

Cool little cassette packed full—twenty-one songs in fact—of outtakes, demos, and singles. Kind of a must have for Coachwhips and John Dwyer lovers. Most songs are pulled from *Hands on the Controls* outtakes, but a few, like "H.C. She (Hey Fanny)," originally appeared on

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the 2003 Coachwhips/Tran Tran Split 7". Most of these songs are new to my ears, so maybe they'll be new to yours. What's old is new once again. —Camille Reynolds (Girlsville)

COMPRESSIONS: Self-titled: CS

Chicago area punks Compressions are scene veterans having previously served time in such prolific acts as Pedestrians, Loser Life, and Divine Right, among many others. Wasting no time, Compressions power through eight songs of *Jealous Again* era Black Flag-inspired hardcore punk delivered with the sort of reckless abandon that can only come from a city whose violent crime rate continues to skyrocket. Anti-social punk for hopeless times. I'm loving it. —Juan Espinosa (Compressions, compressions.bandcamp.com)

CONDUIT: Drowning World: LP

Drowning World is like a nightmare I don't want to wake up from. The LP arrived looking rough as hell—all four of the cover's corners came deeply dog-eared—but as soon as the needle dropped I knew it was going to be in my top ten of 2018. If you tossed Swans, Destruction Unit, and Old Man Gloom in a blender I imagine you'd get something like this album. Conduit's got the heaviest, most distorted and colossal hooks I've heard in a quick minute. If they'd had been around about two millennia ago, *Drowning World* would have made the perfect soundtrack for

Jesus' crucifixion. Fucking brutal, brother. —Simone Carter (Kitschy Spirit, kitschyspirit.com)

CORNER BOYS: Love Tourist: 7"

Hell yeah, Corner Boys. This four-song EP is short, sweet, 'n' to the point: straightforward power pop punk aimed straight at yer dome. I'm hearing wisps of Buzzcocks and Richard Hell in this seven-minute-long EP—the perfect length of time for my pea-sized attention span. Really digging the cover of The Simpletones' "T.V. Love," too. Solid stuff. —Simone Carter (Dirt Cult)

CRIM: Sense Excuses: 7" EP

Crim are an exceptional Spanish street punk band that fit in perfectly on Pirates Press, Longshot, or any of the current staples of the genre. They're exactly what you'd expect: tough (but not too tough), catchy, and well recorded. The title track is a singalong gem of a modern oi track with all the right elements, while "Mai Vam Ser Especials" is more of a rockin', Social Distortion-influenced number. The flip is a pair of covers—Turbonegro and Cock Sparrer—but both are extremely well done, true to originals, and interesting enough to keep your attention. Here's looking forward to watching this band in the future. —Steve Adamyk (Pirates Press / Contra / HFMN Tesla / Bcore Disc)

CRIMINAL KIDS: Self-titled: 12" EP

Criminal Kids is a bar punk band from Chicago, replete with a

Lemmy-emulating vocalist and lead guitar lines. None of it feels phoned-in, despite the numerous tropes retreaded throughout. For punks with a high tolerance for classic rock and metal, as well as for anyone pissed that they can't smoke in bars in most places anymore. —Art Ettinger (Spaghetty Town)

CRIPPENS, THE:

The Minnow and the Pike: 12" EP

New incarnation of the classic late-'80s hardcore band Dr And The Crippens. No idea if the doctor is still in them, but they don't stray too far from the fun-driven, tight hardcore of thirty-plus years ago. This band have always been known more for their live show of stage theatrics and exploding cabbages, but even on wax they have managed to maintain their energy and careless abandon. Good job, lads. —Tim Brooks (Boss Tuneage)

CROWN COURT: "On the GG's" b/w "Mad in England": 7"

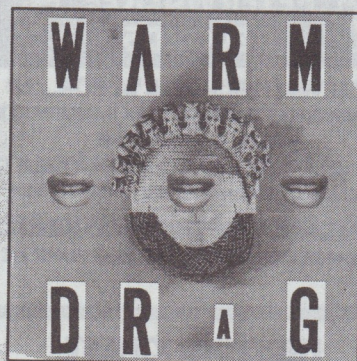
Oi is one of those deceptively simple genres that's difficult to do well. Besides the political minefields, there just aren't a lot of solid oi groups. Many bands see the skin and not the win. Crown Court came out swinging in 2016 with a single and an album that showcased the rainbow of influences spawning the art of oi. The band's recent single has three songs running the gambit of the craft. "On the GG's" has a lifestyle-inspired

chorus with mid-tempo, hard-hitting power chords. "Mad in England" ups the pace with speed and an anthemic sing-a-long chorus. "Fight or Fall" is another slammer to end the single. The single has a welcome retro feel in its production. Good oi has rock'n'roll elements in tow, and Crown Court are obviously students of the genre. —Billups Allen (Goner)

CUTTHROAT BROTHERS, THE:

Self-titled: CD

Looking at the cover of this disc, I said to myself, "What the fuck is this?" It's got two guys covered in tattoos wearing blood-splattered barber smocks holding straight razors. Well, I love me a good schtick, so let's dive in. Wow, not what I was expecting. Mid-tempo garage punk with an ethereal kind of feeling. Kid Congo Powers instantly came to mind, with a little of Alex Cuervo's (of The Hex Dispensers) guitar sound. It's a really cool combination. A little internet information search tells me they are from Seattle (of course legendary grunge producer Jack Endino recorded it) and that number two of this two-piece unit is none other than Donny Paycheck, drummer for Zeke. This is a distinctly Pacific Northwest sound and I immediately gravitated towards it. I'm still not too sure where the shtick fits in, but in the end, it isn't needed because these songs are great and stand on their own. —Ty Stranglehold (Digital Warfare)

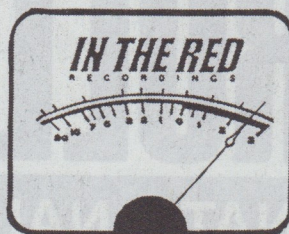


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CYBER BULLIES:

Leather and Lasers: CS

Wow, this is something. I don't know if this is going to make any sense at all, but to me this sounds like—especially where the vocals are concerned—kind of like what I would imagine the unholy spawn of Doc Dart (of the Crucifucks) and Nardwuar the Human Serviette (of The Evaporators) would sound like, and I kind of love every second of it. Weird pop culture interested weirdos making outsider punk with lots of organ interspersed throughout is something that shouldn't work for me, but it does. I want to, in principle, hate this as the level of quirkiness goes against what I would normally have interest in... but there's something about this luring me in and I don't hate it at all! Weird and good. —Mark Twistworthy (More Power)

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY:

Signal Bleed: 7" EP

Been many a moon since I last heard these kids, but this was well worth the wait. Four tracks that strike a perfect balance between death rock and punk—dark, minor chord pop with enough drive to get a body moving. Easily a highlight of this review cycle. —Jimmy Alvarado (Taken By Surprise)

DEAD BARS / RED CAR BURNS:

Split: EP

I can't speak for every local scene everywhere, but I'd hazard to guess that there's probably a band who

plays just about every show. For me, I'm super lucky that Dead Bars is that band. They're just a group of dudes I literally never get sick of seeing. If you've never heard of them, then you're super lucky too because you get to hear a bunch of great songs for the first time. You only get to do that once. Even though I've seen them plenty of times, I don't remember ever hearing the first track ("I Will Be OK"), so that's pretty tight to get a new song. And then they make me want to be a Guided By Voices fan with their cover of "Gold Star for Robot Boy." It's not that I don't like GBV. It's just that I don't have time for every band and they have quite a deep catalog. Anyways, Dead Bars puts their signature snotty vocal treatment on the song and layers up the fuzz in their version. On the flipside is Lodi, Italy's Red Car Burns. (How many Creedence jokes do you think they get being from Lodi?) These two tracks are my introduction to them and it's reminiscent of early aughts emo when it was harmonies couched with introspection before it got to be whiny dudes in eyeliner. Not a mix I could have predicted, but they complement each other well. Four more catchy tunes exist in the world now. Rejoice! —Kayla Greet (No Reason)

DEBT NEGLECTOR:

The Kids Are Pissed: 12" EP

Listening to Debt Neglector's debut album, *Atomicland*, resulted in me

becoming a firm fan of the Floridian band. This EP is the follow up, and enhances my belief that this quartet is one of the finest exponents of melodic punk rock around today. The title of the record says it all, as the six tracks decry the situation the U.S.A. finds itself with Trump at the helm. Opening track "Scared of U.S." kicks off briefly reminding me of Descendents/ALL before just ploughing on with the more discernible Debt Neglector sound I love. The two guitars work in tandem creating a wall of fuzz, whilst the rhythm section punches the songs along with precision. —Rich Cocksedge (Smartpunk)

DENIM PANTHER: Self-titled: CDEP

With riffs influenced—if not straight-up ripped—from the godfathers of heavy metal, Black Sabbath, what's not to love about the gritty rock'n'roll of Denim Panther? The answer is nothing. From the opening riffs of "Jean Queen," with its "Children of the Grave"-esque riffs, straight through to the end of the CD you'll be headbanging along with these Connecticut-based rockers. Give me a dozen more bands like this for every cookie cutter pop punk band out there, and I will not be complaining. —Paul J. Comeau (Denim Panther)

DEZERTER: Kolaboracja II: LP

This record is a reissue of the second album by Polish punk band Dezserter. It was released in 1988

and is interesting in the web of punk styles the band takes on. The opening track, "Kolaboracja II," is a folksy instrumental leading into the very thrashy "Budujesz Faszizm Przez Nietolerancję." It's an angry, anti-fascist song with heavily distorted guitars bordering on DRI's crossover era. The next song is melodic and loses me a little in its swipe into the near-emo universe. I really liked "Fabryka," a discordant droner reminiscent of Dead Kennedys' howling. After settling into some solid '80s punk, the album takes a turn into the dreaded ska song. To be fair, it's not the worst dreaded ska song I ever heard; it's got a bit of second wave snot. The backbone punk songs on this record are excellent and the moments of surprise are enjoyable more often than not. And it looks cool. It's one to check out if you're into '80s punk. —Billups Allen (Pasażer)

DIMBER: Sons and Daughters: 7"

Okay, is there anyone else in L.A. doing high energy, aggressively politically conscious pop punk that traverses dark emotional pop and classic punk with relentless undertones of hope? Building on the energy laid in their debut *Damber*, Dimber's *Sons and Daughters* is more brooding and melodramatic, familiar in Pavlovian ways for those with the embodied vocabulary to decode it. Leads are complex and tasteful; lyrics poetic, real, and raw. Frontwoman CJ doesn't need to


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scream for the severity of "though I try to hide they always find me, how do they always find me" to land like a fucking jackknife. Absolutely beautiful. —Candace Hansen (Chain Letter Collective)

DIRTIEST, THE: 100 Shots: 7"

Slovenly is one of those labels that consistently put out solid records, taking chances on any new band that strikes them as worthy. Florence's The Dirtiest had a prior record, but this one's in their native Italian tongue, adding to the fun. While it might seem too easy to compare them to The Spits, they very much have a heavy Spits influence, which is never a bad thing. These four songs have me craving more. I can't wait for a full-length from The Dirtiest! —Art Ettinger (Slovenly)

DIRTY LIMBS: Demolition: CS

Fresno's Dirty Limbs are serving driving and lo-fi '70s garage punk realism with just a twinge of sad indie pop. Their songs are gritty like thrift store denim. Shitty and bright like walking to the liquor store on a hot day. Melodic like missing a call from someone you love and never hearing from them again. Solid. Sad. Sour. —Candace Hansen (dirtylimbs.bandcamp.com)

DOT DASH: Proto Retro: LP/CD

Proto Retro represented my first encounter with Dot Dash and although it's a name I knew, I didn't really

know what would come my way. The outcome was enjoyable and quite a surprise. It came across as melodic in the way of The Shins, with a bit of an edge, much like Trusty. With quite a firm power pop delivery, the lyrics also enhanced the listening experience due to the interesting word play and some notable humorous moments. It's a subtle and quirky package, one which has led to me seeking out the preceding five albums to listen to. I'm glad I'm getting up to speed on the band. —Rich Cocksedge (TBM, thebeautifulmusic.com)

DROLLS, THE: "Follow That Dinosaur" b/w "Alternate Timeline": 7"

The Drolls was one of many highlights of the recent Soda Punx compilation, so to get a copy of this sent to me was very much a positive occurrence. With two of the band having previously done time in Sicko, it's no big surprise that The Drolls sound a bit like that revered trio. That's all good with me as I remain a firm fan of that band and it's why this newer outfit works for me. Great vocals and guitar have me hooked, as do the two tracks. It's impossible to not reference how much this sounds like Sicko given that both bands feature the same vocalist, so I would imagine if you like Sicko you will like The Drolls. —Rich Cocksedge (Top Drawer)

DYSNEA BOYS: I Scare Me: LP

A brand new offering from Berlin's Dysnea Boys is something to

celebrate. Thirteen off-kilter numbers that have me thinking of San Francisco and in particular the early Thrasher *Skate Rock* compilations. It is no surprise since vocalist Jason Honea once fronted Bay Area legends Social Unrest. This album really takes me back to my earliest dalliances into punk. I can absolutely hear this blasting out of a boom box on the deck of a ramp or edge of our secret section of concrete ditch. It warms my heart. The songs have a churning groove to them that you don't hear all that often in punk and hardcore these days. This German/American/Canadian punk rock coalition really do something that needs to be heard to be believed. Now if only they'd come to North America to tour! —Ty Stranglehold (Self-released)

DZIECI KAPITANA KLOSSA:

Syl Baltycki: LP

Very cool and well-recorded live document of a mostly unheralded (at least in the U.S.) Polish punk/post-punk quintet from the mid-'80s. I would love it if someone could translate not just the lyrics but the extended oral history by former band members included in the accompanying liner notes (all I know is that the album title translates to "Baltic Crap"). What was it like to make underground music in what wound up being the last years of a Communist government? Why did they never make any studio recordings? In the music, they're

somehow fed up and exuberant, draw on the music of their immediate predecessors without exactly copying any one band, and walk a line between direct thrashing and something melodic and subtle, which is really the ideal. —Matt Werts (Pasażer)

EDS: Demo 2017: CS

From the looks of this tape, New Jersey's EDS are pissed off, high on meth, and working through some heavy PTSD while hating Trump. I'm both fucking amped and concerned for them. For fans of Agnostic Front, MDC, and running up uneven concrete hills as a form of self care. Brutal. —Candace Hansen (exciteddeliriumsyndrome.bandcamp.com)

EEPHUS: Gift Shark EP: CS

These guys put the "punk" back in pop punk. Their sound is raucous, anthemic, and biting. Eephus is tight, yet sloppy, in just the right ways. Guitar melodies are bright and kinda crunchy, if you know what I mean. Bass is low and heavy in the mix. Drums are consistently hard hitting. What pulls me in the most is the vocals. The lyrics are really belted out in a way that holds melody but pushes the limits of the singer to the point where they're just about to crack. And the mix is balanced well, so nothing is completely overpowering. RIYL The Uranium Club, Hot Snakes, Matriarch. The name Eephus is a baseball term for a

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junk pitch that's very low speed and is meant to be a total surprise to the batter. Beside the pacing, I think that definition is pretty spot on. —Kayla Greet (Self-released)

EXMAID: *Fair Sex*: LP

Miranda Taylor of Hunchback and Black Wine is a mainstay of the New Jersey DIY scene. As the songwriter and frontperson of Exmaid, her soft, tuneful vocal melodies complement the dense guitars, like a lullaby enveloped in distortion. Album opener "Vamp" sets the tone: noisy, angular, and hypnotic—it's an uncompromising sound. "Easy" trudges along with a heavy riff brightened by Taylor's exuberant voice while "Devoted" commands with a spastic tempo and seething vocals. *Fair Sex* is an achievement. All ten songs somehow meld the minimalism of The Breeders with the angularity of post-hardcore, resulting in a record that exudes a palpable passion that's impossible to shake. —Sean Arenas (SRA)

FACE TO FACE:

Hold Fast: Acoustic Sessions: CD

Upon hearing Face To Face do acoustic versions of some of their best songs, I discovered that not all of them work that well sans electricity. Doing a slower, acoustic version of a song may jack up the level of emotion and plaintiveness, but at times the result is a song that is overwrought and unnecessarily

defanged. Some versions are really great, though, when the band adds in a level of complexity with the rhythms and the instrumentation and keeps to an uptempo beat. The versions of "Keep Your Chin Up," "Don't Turn Away," and "Ordinary" contained herein were particularly good in that regard. If you're way into Face To Face you'll undoubtedly want to pick this up, but for the rest of you I offer no guarantees. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Fat)

FIRECRACKER 500: *Self-titled*: LP

I will let you in on a secret. I will buy something completely unheard just because it is on Hostage Records. Their track record is impeccable. At first, I thought that I was a rarity but in the age of social media it has become apparent that there is a worldwide rabid fanbase for all things Hostage and I couldn't be happier. Let's talk Firecracker 500. All I had heard previous to this was their killer song "Saturated" on the *Collateral Damage* compilation. Their debut album takes off like rocket from the first note. The band is Hostage through and through—tough beach punk with heart. The songs reflect everyday issues through the prism that is the modern world. Musically, I feel like F-500 is definitely up to the task of filling that gaping hole left by the demise of Broken Bottles (RIP Jess). Add this band to the long list of bands on Hostage that I will continue to obsess

about for the foreseeable future. —Ty Stranglehold (Hostage)

FORBIDDEN DIMENSION:

Muchas Moscas: 2 x CD

As of this writing, it is now October. October means Halloween and Halloween means the Forbidden Dimension in my house. In an instance of great timing, Calgary Alberta's legendary horror rockers are celebrating their thirtieth year on this mortal plane with the release of their seventh full length album. As with their previous few albums, there is a heavy dose of '70s rock in the mix with their trademark garage punk stylings. It's as if Phil Lynott, Lemmy, Glenn Danzig, and Lux Interior all managed to get trapped in the same teleportation experiment and came out the other side as a horrible Brundlefly of a beast named Jackson Phibes. I think my favorite songs this time around are "Subjugation Fantasy Camp," "Fang Song," and "Infiltrating the Crypt of Graf Shambal-Oelek." Great all year round, but especially great in the fall when things need to be creepy. The second disc is entitled *13 Bloody Greats Alive* and features some of FD's earlier work "live" from Catheter, Alberta. Here's to another thirty amazingly creepy years! —Ty Stranglehold (Fuzzwarp)

FREAKS OF NATURE, THE:

Want Me! 7"

Title track is an effective bit o' '60s fuzz rock that punks things up quite

nicely. Flip is a rave-up built on a Bo Diddley base that gets the patas stompin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Related)

FRIENDS OF CESAR ROMERO:

Trashionista!: CS

Self-described "carport rock," Friends Of Cesar Romero are a prolific garage punk outfit that is at times deliberately non-catchy then at other times extremely so. It's a full length, despite the cassingle packaging. Limited to just ninety copies, it's a delightful sample of the neo garage punk they've been playing for the past seven years or so. Count me in as a friend of Friends Of Cesar Romero. —Art Ettinger (Self-released)

GAG TAPE: *Self-titled*: CS

Loud, fast, and reverbed the fuck out, Boyle Height's Gag Tape are serving up some classic hardcore in the vein of Los Crudos, Spit Boy, and GLOSS. I can't tell if I'm more obsessed with "savior," a twenty second powerviolence shredder, or "Shut Up and Listen," a song that feels like its a breakdown the whole way through. Gag Tape is punk as fuck. I don't know if I'm even punk enough to review this, but for me it's a 10/10 for a hardcore demo. Stoked to see what's next for these folks. —Candace Hansen (Jam House)

GLAZER:

On a Prairie, Live in the Dirt: LP

First of all, I fucking love the cover art. It's spooky and weird and intriguing.

REFLECTIVE TAPES
SUMMER 2018 CATALOG

- REF-80 **DUMP HIM** "VENUS IN RETRO-GRADE"... WMASS' FAVORITE QUEERCORE/BASEMENT POP, LIVE TAPE.
- REF-83 **SPIT-TAKE** "FALLING STAR"... NEW HAVEN'S INDIE PUNK TRIO'S 3RD & FINEST FULL-LENGTH, VINYL ON DEAD BROKE.
- REF-84 **LITTER PARTY** "MEMORY LOSS"... SEATTLE/AKRON DUO MAKES QUIRKY D.I.X. POWER-POP, MEMBER OF DOGBRETH.
- REF-85 **LARK** "LOVING WHAT LEAVES ME"... OLY KEYBOARD-DRIVEN FUZZ ROCK ALA BUTTERCLOTH, TIMES NEW VIKING.

SOON... FLEABITE BOMBSHELL NIGHT-LIGHT, WORLDS FAIR, SPECIAL MOVES.

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I would have guessed this was an atmospheric black metal band from the image on the front, but that's not what I found inside. Instead, they're a noise rock, post-punk outfit from New Brunswick. The vocals have some distortion on them and sound blown out on purpose. "Amplified Mind" is mere seconds away from being the longest song on the record, and for good reason. They pack a mighty punch in that track, then bob and weave in a slowed-down bridge toward the back end before bursting into another crunchy, thrashy mess. They've definitely bled through some indie rock and grunge influences. Dare I say there's a little Dino Jr. and Sonic Youth mixing in with layered My Bloody Valentine guitar effects. For how all over the place this record is, once you make it to the end you can fully see the through line they built into these songs. It's really a neat and tightly packed gift, but assembled with heavy, psychedelic, and out of control elements. —Kayla Greet (State Champion)

GOUGE AWAY: *Burnt Sugar*: CD/LP

Often times, upon hearing a new band, I find it difficult to figure out from where they draw an influence. But with Gouge Away their influences are so blatant and varied that I can hear a lot of great acts shining through in their style: G.L.O.S.S., Punch, Super Unison, Jesus Lizard, and (old) Ceremony, just to name a few. While their last release, *Dies*,

was blistering powerviolence, *Burnt Sugar* has a varied style. Some of the music is snotty and pure hardcore, but other tracks such as "Stray/Burnt Sugar" are fun indie rock tunes. Christina Michelle's vocals sound at times like Megan from Punch and Super Unison, while at other times I hear a pissed-off Courtney Love. The passion of the music and vocals kept me entertained, but their ability to put down diverse styles and still make the album cohesive is what impressed me most. While it may be easy to think Gouge Away are just a rip-off of Punch and Super Unison, there's a lot more texture and maturity going on here than what such a first impression may cause one to believe. —Kurt Morris (Deathwish)

GOVERNNESS: *Self-titled*: LP

Imagine if a dark chamber choir heavily influenced by girl groups was hired to produce a punk band. Governness is giving us all of that and more in their debut self-titled LP. They've definitely got a bit of that contemporary DC Priests-influenced sound: spacey yet definite guitar paired with smart vocals and steady, meaty, rhythm. Vibes well with doing tarot and reflecting. —Candace Hansen (Radical Empathy / One Percent Press)

HEALERS: *Street Sweeping*: CS

I love healing. I hate street sweepers. I wonder what *Street Sweeping* means for them. Is it a metaphor? A reference

to an experience? Street sweepers are great in theory, cleaning off the shit of civilization for the greater good of everyone, but are used to siphon money more than practicing community upkeep. The sound of this tape embodies complexity, the feeling at the intersection of intention and reality. Wrapped up in black artwork of flowers and a snake, distorted synth à la The Screamers with mismatched vocal harmonies, simple disco beats, and floor tom-heavy drums make it sound familiar in a decade-spanning kind of way, but still distinctly of the current punk scene. Songs are short and smart. No surprise this band started in Olympia and moved to Oakland; the sound is totally reflective of that gritty-yet-poetic feel both cities have come to be associated with. Highly recommend. —Candace Hansen (Dumpster Fire)

HEAVY MANTLE:

***Weights & Measures*: LP**

I've seen a lot of places online compare these guys to Small Brown Bike, Fugazi, and Cursive. While I can certainly see why, I'm more inclined to align their sound with bands like Hi Ho Silver, Away! (especially on the song "Untitled"), Rites Of Spring, and Embrace. I suppose there's a little bit of Refused in there, too. But, overall, what I'm trying to say is that this is a perfect specimen of screamo or early emo. I always want to rip my hair out when people boil emo down to shitty, sensitive pop bands

like My Chemical Romance, Fall Out Boy, and Dashboard Confessional. No, Heavy Mantle is doing it right. They're sticking true to the post-hardcore roots mixed with mathy bits and screaming. I don't know how to drive home the point better, but this band is absolutely worth checking out and becoming your new favorite. —Kayla Greet (Tor Johnson)

HOARDER: *Buried*: CS

Leave it to the Olympia hardcore scene to hit you with an unexpected ripper that will make you want to cry, pit, and laugh. At first glance I couldn't tell if it was a concept album about hoarding or some tongue-in-cheek comment on capitalism, with a chipmunk photo superimposed over a super late-'90s crust logo that says "freedom from possessions / autonomy for all." Look, I'm here for liberatory aesthetics in punk, but the thematics are a little strong on this one. Either way, *Buried's* ten tracks shred through aggressive punk and breakdowns with personal lyrics and humor. I nearly spit out my water when the vocalist Tiffany screamed, "I can't take you seriously if you listen to the fucking Ramones." Shots fired, L.A.! —Candace Hansen (hoarderoly.bandcamp.com)

HUMAN HEAT: *Fragment*: CS

I'm a latecomer to the post-Jawbreaker melodic emo punk party, but I'm ready for it to take over my body this season. Human Heat's

somerset thrower



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Fragment does just that. It permeates through sweeping soundscapes of joy and heartbreak, high notes reaching and resolving, resonating like pop punk healing bells. Maybe I'm a sucker for vulnerability, maps, and a break up anthem. Maybe clichés fit once you've lived enough to let them settle in. Either way, I'm here for every built-up break down and distance metaphor Human Heat's got for me. —Candace Hansen (Circle House)

HURT HAWKS:

Playboys in the Boudoir: CS

One of the marvelous things about being a *Razorcake* reviewer is embracing the teeming diversity in which our merry planet is steeped. This particular diversity sounds like Screamin' Jay Hawkins fronting Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, backed by Kate and Cindy of the B-52's. Embrace *that* and stay fashionable! **BEST SONG** "Grand Cross of the German Eagle." **BEST SONG TITLE:** "'74 Maverick," because I actually used to own a '74 Maverick. Delivered pizzas in it, the works. *Three on the tree, buddy!* **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** See **BEST SONG TITLE.** —Rev. Nørð (Mystic Fragments)

I SAID GOODBYE:

Fairweather: LP/CD

Steady as she goes melodic punk rock that is in the earlier Jimmy Eat World ballpark. That being said, the

vocals definitely give notice of the band being from the U.K., ensuring a sound which spans the Atlantic Ocean. The production delivers a tight, almost slick output, with a strong musical presence over which one guitar embellishes the songs by intricately following the vocal melodies. It's very much along the lines of later Samiam and works very well. This isn't a rowdy record but it does have a few moments when songs really burst into life, with "Better Luck Next Time" and "Smokehouse" containing the most energy. Another decent release from Little Rocket Records. —Rich Cocksedge (Little Rocket)

IV: Self-titled: 7"

Punchy, Stiff Little Fingers-ish punk from Minneapolis with choppy riffs and big choruses. Street punk with genuine adrenaline instead of tedious conservative role-playing. When I see the Total Punk logo, I say "fuck yeah" because I know I'm about to get knocked upside the head by some perfectly raw punk like this. Four songs. —Chris Terry (Total Punk)

JETBOYS, THE: *I Don't Want to: 7"*

Reissue of a 45 by an Ohio band, originally released on New Age Records 1981. "I Don't Want to" is minor chord, slash-guitar pop with the standard doo-wop chord structure employed for the chorus. The flip, "Get the Kids Jumping," is the more frenetic of the two tunes here, more

"punk" in delivery, and tailor made for some punk rarities bootleg.

—Jimmy Alvarado (Rerun)

KING BROTHERS: *Wasteland: CD*

This is pretty cool stuff—Japanese hardcore blues, as they call themselves. It's got a lot of energy and a dirty edge. King Brothers have previously released an album on In The Red Records, so that may give you a general idea of what they're like. But I could see them fitting in with bands on Sympathy For The Record Industry back in the day or Goner Records. They also thank Guitar Wolf and Jon Spencer Blues Explosion in their album, and I can imagine them touring with King Brothers. Most of the lyrics on *Wasteland* are in Japanese but their sound and energy is universal. From video I watched, they put on an incredible live show and they've been around for about twenty years, so they're certainly doing something right. If you want high-octane blues rock and roll, then check this out. —Kurt Morris (Hound Gawd)

KNEE-JERK: *Demo: CD*

Knee-Jerk play straight-up hardcore punk that kicks you in the teeth from the opening riff. The band captures everything I love about hardcore punk, namely its raw, concentrated fury. Each song is like a fast gut check, getting the message through, without any fuss. Even the anthemic singalong track "Inept," while longer

than the other tracks on the CD, still feels lean and in your face. It's a track sure to inspire some pile-ons and other nonsense at shows. The one complaint I had about this demo was that it was too short. Three songs were just not enough! Definitely looking forward to more. —Paul J. Comeau (Bankrupt Studios)

LANDSPEEDER / YAVIN 4, THE:

Split: 7"

The artwork for this single references Star Wars and the title of the split single is "Scum and Villainy," for anyone who might be interested. The Yavin 4 bring two songs of speedy, mid-'90 Fearless Records-style melodic punk on their side of this split single. Very much in the vein of early Strung Out or other punk bands with "chops" and playing ability. One song is called "Tusken Raider," so the theme is driven home even further. Landspeeder are much poppier with a real Mutant Pop-style sound, kind of mid-fi production. Not as twee as, say, Kung Fu Monkeys, but not as punk as their partner band on the other side of the record. —Mike Frame (Milkstop)

LAST GANG, THE:

Keep Them Counting: CD

I remember seeing The Last Gang shredding the shit out of unsuspecting bars in OC a decade ago and it's so great to see Brenna Bishop and the gang getting some much-deserved recognition with their Fat debut *Keep*

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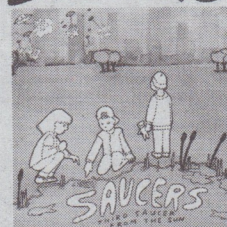
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Them Counting. They're doing early aughts punk rock the right way: a little Laura Jane Grace with pop rock sheen, a little Joe Strummer producing the Distillers vibe. For fans of classic Epitaph bands, their bouncy bass and catchy melodies would have fit right in on all those iconic *Punk-O-Rama* comps. —Candace Hansen (Fat)

LIFE HACKS: *Can We Unlearn the American Dream?*: CS

Gruff, melodic punk with earnest, starry-eyed politics, a strong sense of humor (gotta love a song called "Born in the USB"), solid singalong songcraft, and contrasty copier art on the cover. If you get amped when a new issue of *Cometbus* comes out, or have a soft spot for Fifteen, Dillinger Four, and Ringers, these Bostonians are sure to plunge your French press. —Chris Terry (Dead Broke / lifehacksbostonpunk.bandcamp.com)

USA MARR WITH THE TRANZMITORS: *Self-titled*: 7"

This absolutely essential new release features Lisa Marr from Cub playing songs by the Fastbacks and Cub, with Vancouver's Tranzmitors as her backing band. Pressed on colored vinyl and with cover art by Jean Smith of Mecca Normal, the packaging is as great as the contents therein. It's a four-song 7" prepared for the January 2019 Seattle Pop Punk Festival, with all profits set to go to the Vancouver Rock Camp for Girls. It's released by Top Drawer Records, Ean from

Sicko's label, which is fitting since so many of us got into Cub via Sicko's brilliant cover of Cub's "Little Star." It's an outstanding record all around, so make sure to check it out! —Art Ettinger (Top Drawer)

LITTER PARTY: *Memory Loss*: CS

Super duper mellow indie rock. If you're looking for a sleepy riff to roll you into Fall, here it is. A couple of the tracks clock in over five minutes, which feels like an eternity when it comes to punk. To be quite honest, I felt like it was a bit of a slog. Apparently, it was recorded half in Akron and half in Seattle, a bit like The Postal Service, which in and of itself is rather impressive to get two halves to meld into one recording. I'll laud them on their motivation for the record, as their bandcamp dedicates it to anyone who's "struggled with addiction, codependency, and traumatic emotional experiences." That's a crowd deserving of some great art. I enjoy the first two tracks as they're the only ones with a bit of umph to them, but after that the tempo really drops off and I lose interest. If you like slow, mathy stuff, this might be for you. —Kayla Greet (Reflective Tapes)

LOPEZ, THE: *Like a Prayer*: 7"

Thankfully, not a cover of the well-known Madonna song, the A-side is kind of an electro pop sound, fairly well recorded and would not sound out of place on a split single with Bis.

The flip is similar, with what sounds like a drum machine backing. It's a little more mid tempo and poppy but the same electro pop vibes abound. Cat puke-colored vinyl single from this Pittsburgh band that fans of the mid-to-late '90s sounds coming out of the U.K. would be likely to really enjoy. —Mike Frame (SKR, thelopez.bandcamp.com)

LOST AVENUE: *Fears*: LP/CD

I like records that initially confound and challenge me and *Fears* is one that certainly did that on the first few spins. I couldn't tell what the band was trying to do: was it rock? Was it punk? Was it indie? The distinctive vocals even nodded towards metal at times, whilst a good handful of the songs would be in the center of a Venn diagram containing the three styles above. It was only after about half a dozen plays that I realized I didn't care and that I was just enjoying the majority of songs enough to have me singing along to them. This Northern Irish trio is now firmly on my radar for all its future endeavors. —Rich Cocksedge (Little Rocket)

LÖTFETT [/...]: *Split*: 7"

Germany's Phantom Records has paired two gleefully deviant noisemakers on this 7". Lötfett boasts head-spinning drum fills, snarling vocals, and razor-sharp guitars. Imagine a lost Rudimentary Peni EP. Chaotic, dangerous, and mesmerizing, Lötfett's three songs sound like pirate

transmissions of *Videodrome*. On the flip-side, [...] (yes, that's their band name) starts a bit folk punky (think This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb hopped up on Adderall), but then takes a hard left turn. The songs devolve to an almost Cro-Magnon level, becoming the perfect marching music for the demonic dwarves from *Phantasm*. That's a compliment. —Sean Arenas (Phantom)

LOWEST, THE: *Doomed*: LP

"Doomed" is about as accurate a description for this record as could be conjured. Screamed in English, this Polish band brings the heavy on this bleak, dissonant slab of doomcore. With just as much in common with a band like Triptykon as with Amebix, the darkness is relentless, perhaps even more dreadful with the slower tempos. Records like this are not for the weak of heart, but if—like me—bleak music helps exorcise those negative feelings that reside in all of us, *Doomed* is certainly worth exploring. —Chad Williams (Pasażer)

LUCHADOR LIBRE: *Bit by Bit*: CD

A self-described "nerd rock" group, Luchador Libre is basically what happens when electro-pop meets pop punk with some Weezer thrown in. There's also a video game and computer influence, as there's an entire song about computer scientist Alan Turing ("Turing Complete") and another that references (and sounds like something from) Super Mario

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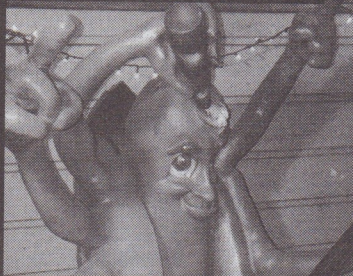


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Brothers ("Friend Zone"). That said, there are some super catchy tunes like "Work Love Balance" that have no reason not to be big pop hits. However, the punk influence is fairly light for my tastes and the heavy-handed references to not being able to find success in love were a bit too much. Still, it shows some promise and I'd be interested in hearing more as the band progresses. —Kurt Morris (Self-released)

LULLIES, LES: Self-titled: LP

I had the pleasure of rocking out with these French pretty boy rockers at Debauch-a-Reno Fest, and they are the real deal. Early Scientists and Real Kids power pop goodness, with plenty of fast, melodic riffs, big, poofy hair, tight pants, and Chelsea boots. Rock'n'roll that's sweet, sweaty, and defiant. —Camylle Reynolds (Slovenly)

LUX VANITAS:

The Secret Life of...: LP

"Lost" recording of this Twin Cities garage/punk/very '90s-sounding band. Members went to form heavier bands but this release doesn't really touch on that and instead focuses on their place in the Minneapolis-area scene during their tenure and the influence they had on the head of 25 Diamonds Records. The sound draws from a lot of influences, like the garage bands listed in the liner notes (Cramps, Mummies) but has some emo influence and a very '90s

Midwestern feel of angular bands like Cap'n Jazz. Not to say they sound like Cap'n Jazz per se, but both bands were obviously pulling from the Minutemen/Big Boys/funked out school of punk. —Ian Wise (25 Diamonds)

MAN DESTROYS: *Everything: 7" EP*

Long Beach supergroup wherein Jeff from Final Conflict is joined by members of Suicidal Supermarket Trolleys, Doomsday Hour, and Damnatösque to thrash things up a bit. This is the band's demo pressed onto pink wax. A bit less metallic than some of the output of their previous bands, and the guitar volume could've used a nudge up in volume, but otherwise this hits the spot, punker. —Jimmy Alvarado (Not Like You)

MIGHTY JABRONIS, THE:

Heart Punch My Heart: 7"

The title track comes off like a lost early '80s Mid-American punk gem—a scrappy pop nugget that keeps the delivery sparse but the oomph in spades. The flip, "Put 'Em in a Headlock," is a more uptempo and prototypical "punk" stomper. Both have an early Dicks feel with maybe a bit less of that band's feral menace. Good single. —Jimmy Alvarado (Uh Huh)

MODPODS: *No Strut: CS*

ModPods aren't partially anything. They are fully engaged. Fully feeling

and emanating through digital tentacles, like neuron transmitters between three brains, all powering the same brilliant engine. But this is no science experiment. It's poetry in motion. Heavy dance drums beat with arms and synthesizers lay foundations for vocalist Myriad to croon and contemplate like Grace Jones being produced by Beth Ditto. Rhythmically curated silences forge angular pauses that you will need to take a breath from bedroom dancing yourself into a fucked-up frenzy. Fully traversing a path into an unwritten circuit board feminist future, *No Strut* is sentimental and steady, overpowered by an uncompromising dedication to dance and the complex feeling of anticipation. Perfect. —Candace Hansen (Animales De Estero)

MORLOCKS, THE: *Bring on the Mesmeric Condition: CD*

I was first introduced to The Morlocks eighteen years ago when my college radio station was throwing away a battered copy of their '87 album *Submerged Alive*. This modern incarnation of the band features long-time Morlocks vocalist Leighton Koizumi, but none of the band's other original members. On *Bring on The Mesmeric Condition*, Koizumi's hired guns serve as excellent stand-ins for the originals. Their psych-infused garage rock tunes are the perfect backing to the crooning and snarling of Koizumi's vocal delivery. Every track on this

album is an earworm, but the most catching for me was "One Foot in the Grave," with its Jerry Lee Lewis-esque piano backing some killer guitar licks. If you're looking for an album that captures the spirit of classic rock'n'roll, look no further. —Paul J. Comeau (Hound Gawd!)

MORON'S MORONS:

Indecent Exposure: 7"

Moron's Morons play fantastically sleazy Polish garage punk, with tons of hooks and distorted vocals. The lyrics are sung in heavily accented English, creating a terrific effect. The packaging harkens to old exploitation movie poster art, which is fitting given the grimy content on all four of the tracks. It's kind of reminiscent of *Mission to Rock-era* Steve McQueens, but with even heavier distortion. Further proof that you can pick up anything Slovenly puts out and not be disappointed. —Art Ettinger (Slovenly)

MOVING TARGETS:

The Other Side: CD

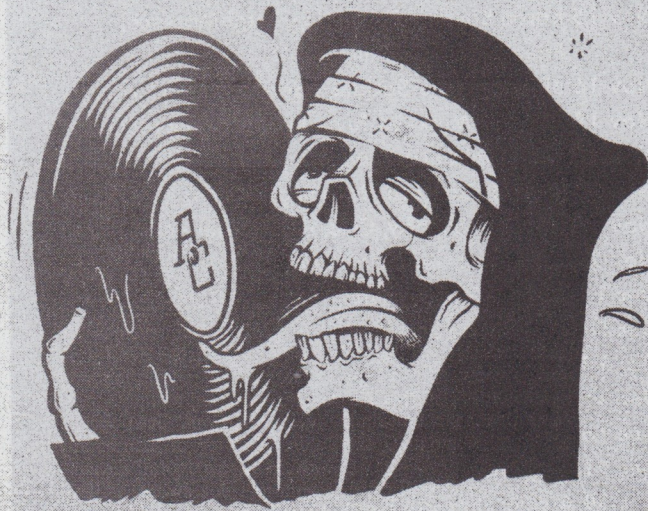
This is awesome! Imagine if Grant Hart was writing songs and performing in Mission Of Burma, and you are somewhat onto the sound of the Moving Targets. The material here is taken from demos (1983 to 1985), radio show performances (1987 to 2007) and a couple outtakes. I remember seeing ads for these guys when they were around, but never took the time to give them a listen. I

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wish I had, because this music is some seriously soul-enriching stuff. Their music is hard driving and tuneful, and the vocals have a sincerity that is unquestionable. Songs like "Faith," "Always Calling," "Hole," "In the Way," and "The Other Side" will send a jolt of lightning down your spine and everything feels and sounds new again. The 2007 radio show performance is unbelievably good. They perform songs they wrote over three decades ago, and they sound fresh and new. The urgency is still there in the recordings, and the playing is tight and shot through with soul and energy. You really need to hear these songs. —Matt Average (Boss Tuneage)

MÜLLTÜTE: Self-titled: LP

Second full-length from this German terrorist cell. Like a dirty bomb of unconventional, trendless hardcore punk, this record just decimates every corny fest lineup and nostalgic reunion tour your buddy's younger sibling is *really* excited about. Scummy, sharp guitars and barked German vocals. It's *Welcome to 1984* in 2018; the rules were never created. Twelve years ago, a Swedish band named Svartenbrandt released a fourteen minute masterpiece called *Från Andra Sidan Spåren*. I've never heard a band that I felt was comparable to them until I heard Mülltüte. For those keeping score at home, that's a grand slam of a recommendation. Get this record

and erase all the preconceptions you've been indoctrinated with. —Daryl (Self-released, muetue@heartfirst.net)

MYSTERY GIRL: *Wild & Mean: 7" EP*

Four tracks of punk with a heavy New York Dolls influence—lots of blues-tinged guitar, mid-tempo, and swagger. The style ain't easy to pull off with conviction, but they do so handily throughout. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feral Kid)

NATTERERS: *Head in Threatening Attitude: LP/CD*

I am a big fan of this band and own more Natterers shirts than I care to admit. From the first time I heard the band's primarily California-influenced punk rock tunes a few years ago, I have closely monitored its growth across a number of singles. This is a group that has continually built on its strengths to this point, where *Head in Threatening Attitude* is a quality representation of the collective abilities of all involved. That means surf-tinged punk rock in which hints of Dead Kennedys, T.S.O.L., and Agent Orange can be heard, yet never too much that one could accuse Natterers of being derivative. Emma angrily screams and shouts her way through fourteen tracks, however, when she almost casually proclaims that "dead men don't catcall," on the song of that title, there is a truly sinister feel to her words. Alongside this, Tom's guitar

adds an East Bay Ray quality that chops and changes pace with ease, the best example being on "Not Long Left Now," my favorite track on the album. The vocals and guitar have always been the strongest elements of the band for me, but they are now well matched by a new rhythm section consisting of Rob, a bassist renowned for doing time in H.D.Q., and Dave, a drummer who also beats the skins for Voorhees and The Young Conservatives. These additions have really had a big impact with the band sounding much more complete than before, resulting in a bit more musical power. My initial encounter with Natterers also reminded me of Night Birds quite a bit and the album is brought to a conclusion with a surf-punk instrumental, which is very much in line with the New Jersey outfit. A new shirt? Go on then, just make it a Natterers one. —Rich Cocksedge (Boss Tuneage)

NEUROTIC FICTION: *Pulp Music: LP*

I'm not sure that describing an album as "charming" is something a band would want to read but that's what *Pulp Music* is. There's a post-punk feel to the songs but without the use of reverb/echo, leaving a clean sound that almost strolls steadily along, only occasionally getting close to breaking into a sweat. Even when some of the songs do pick up pace it's done in a very relaxed way. It's all very easy to take on board, well played, and at times make me think

of Girls At Our Best! and Heavenly, as there are occasional hints of indie pop coming through. I haven't heard previous Neurotic Fiction releases but on the evidence here, I think I'd like them. —Rich Cocksedge (Specialist Subject)

NIGHT BIRDS: *Roll Credits: CD*

What can I say that hasn't already been said about the genius of New Jersey horror-surf-punk prodigies Night Birds? There are very few bands I can think of where I am certain that I will not be let down by any of their records. *Roll Credits* continues right where *Mutiny at Muscle Beach* left off, if not surpassing it entirely. This may or may not have something to do with the return of founding member Mike Hunchback and his contributions to the writing and performing on this record. It should bear mentioning that as loyal as Night Birds are to their influences, and punk in general, they are even more loyal to their friends, some of which they commissioned to contribute artwork for the album and include Marissa Paternoster (Screaming Females), Nathan Gattis (Tarantula, Culo), Paul D'Elia (Rough Kids, Tear It Up), and Chris Shary (Descendents T-shirt artist). As if this album needed any more selling points, the songs "Radium Girls" and "Onward to Obscurity" feature guest vocals by Kate Eldridge (Big Eyes) and Jerry A. (fuckin' Poison Idea. Are you fucking kidding me?) respectively. I am not



exaggerating when I say that "My Dad Is the BTK" is a song that kids will be covering in their garages and basements twenty years from now. Yo, who wants to give me the Night Birds dagger tattoo? I'm on board for life. —Juan Espinosa (Fat)

NIGHT BIRDS: *Roll Credits*: LP/CD

If anyone is going to release an album—or mini-album as the band refer to this as, containing just eight tracks—then the pressure is on to ensure that there is an absence of filler. Fortunately this is Night Birds, a band renowned for eschewing padding and one which also leaves no stone unturned in its approach to writing a great tune. *Roll Credits* include instrumental bookends, a specialty of this former quartet now sporting a second guitarist, and they do a grand job of containing the mayhem in between. My favorite, of many highlights, is at the start of the second track, "Onward to Obscurity," where, as the intro plays, Brian Gorseger's desire to get involved in proceedings is evident as he screams his way into commencing his vocals on one of the best songs I've heard from Night Birds. Mind you, competition for that title is hot here as "White Noise Machine" is another contender, going by in a blur of seventy-five seconds. Mention must also be made of "Radium Girls," which sounds to me like a midway point between Night Birds and Gorseger's other band, Character Actor, highlighting that it's

not all about the speed and that there is room for a hint of pop too. Few bands can touch Night Birds. In my opinion, it never fails to deliver, and I consider this to be its finest release to date. I would always want more songs, but *Roll Credits* has the feel of being something extra special about it and I think it's the brevity that results in this being a perfect release. —Rich Cocksedge (Fat)

NO ACTION: *Self-titled*: LP

These South Australians have a stunner of an album on their hands here. Equal parts punk, dream pop, and "alternative rock" of the kind when that appellation actually meant an alternative to something, they adroitly weave songs that often seem contradictory—cerebral yet accessible, dense yet sparse, dissonant yet exceedingly catchy, sprawling yet focused—in ways that recall prime Poster Children. Fine work from start to finish. —Jimmy Alvarado (Unwound, unwoundrecords.com)

NOFX: *Live in a Dive: Ribbed*: CD

It seems to have caught some NOFX fans by surprise that the band chose *Ribbed* as the album to perform in its entirety, no less as a live album. They've been doing *Punk in Drublic* live in full for some time, but while that may have been the obvious choice, I couldn't have been happier they picked *Ribbed* in the end. *Ribbed* has always been my favorite NOFX

record, for a number a reasons. This was a pinnacle era for the band. Their previous effort, 1989's *S&M Airlines*, showcased a group in the midst of their growth: less intense/gruff than *Liberal Animation*, but still leaning towards a crossover metal sound. People forget, but this was an era when band like DRI still topped the charts for this genre, and its influence shows. With *Ribbed*, the band evolved further, but some of those undertones are still prevalent. *Ribbed* was recorded with their previous guitarist Steve—just a hair before El Hefe joined the band—and the RKL-style guitar licks are really what gives the album some of its charm (and what eventually molded into NOFX's classic sound). The humor factor is also taken up a notch, which is again another step towards what NOFX is famously known for. On this live album, Mike can be heard throughout it in between songs, referencing how hard some of them are to play and how they're going to fuck them up, and he isn't full of shit. *Ribbed* documented a young band at one of their technical peaks, an album that is slightly more unique and challenging than their later efforts. That almost makes it sound experimental, which isn't the case. It's just a band writing catchy songs and blazing through fourteen songs in thirty minutes while doing so. They pull off spectacularly on this record as well. —Steve Adamyk (Fat)

NOFX: *Ribbed Live in a Dive*: LP

Looks like Fat resurrected the *Live in a Dive* series and first up we have NOFX doing their *Ribbed* LP in its entirety. First of all, I wouldn't call the Mayan Theater in downtown Los Angeles a dive, but I will give them a pass. It's a little weird that this was recorded six years ago, but, hey, I have another pass to give. So, literally, this is a track-by-track recreation of the original album which I really find to be a definitive classic and certainly one of the highlights of the band's vast catalog. So is this needed or any kind of improvement on the original? Well no, but I suspect that wasn't the point. At this point, NOFX don't have to explain shit, and you know what? This six-year-old recording revisiting an album released in 1991 stacks up just fine against most anything else that comes across my turntable lately, so I say fuck yeah and why not? It's a great way of bringing back a pretty cool series, if you ask me. —Garrett Barnwell (Fat)

OCTOPOULE: *10,000*: LP

This album has me beat, folks. On paper, it is technically describable: post-hardcore-coded freakouts with a variety of tension-relieving instrumental breaks. The vocals seem to be contributed by a wide variety of musicians, even having one track sample the non-words of current White House resident Donald Trump. My positive vibes for this record come from the experimentation and

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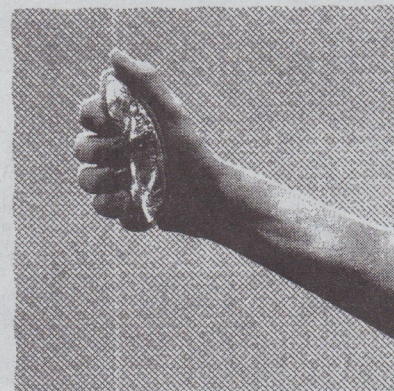
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refusal of settling for one sound. This is an odd duck, but I'm curious to see how they continue pushing the boundaries of their genre. —Bryan Static (5FeetUnder / Punt! Scena / Crusatombe / Rejuvenation / Gabu / Ribea)

ONLY FLESH: *Cells Out*: CD+DVD

Only Flesh are the sonic equivalent of a Frankenstein's monster tearing a peasant victim limb from limb: a mix of hardcore sensibilities and gothic horror punk, and hard for me not to like. They remind me of a more aggressive and less elegant version of Temper Temper, or of a more knife-edged Samhain with dollops of psychobilly attitude. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Rotten)

ORGAN GRINDER / INVERTEBRATE / NERVE GRIND: *Split*: 7"EP

Organ Dealer exist at the nexus of grindcore and powerviolence to mete out sonically crushing tuneage that doesn't fuck around. More, I say! More! Nerve Grind blast through three ugly grinders with vocals that sound dredged up from the depths of the darkest of loathing. Invertebrate sound like a lost Bay Area powerviolence band from around 1995. Dual vocals, short blasts, mid-tempo middles, and samples squeezed in where appropriate. These nine songs are fuggin' killer. The whole record is a primo scorcher. —Matt Average (Night Animal)

OVER: *Vacant Daydream*: CS

Heavy, spacey, dark, and dreamy, Over's *Vacant Daydream* is perfect for hi-key goth emo punx who spent hot summers dancing to The Faint in their bedrooms while overapplying eyeliner before cruising at metal shows. Standout track "Death of Autonomy" gives me some 45 Grave meets The Gossip realness. It's great to see a new band identifying as death rock, especially one that centers justice and healing in their mission. —Candace Hansen (overpdx.bandcamp.com)

PANDEMIX: *"Rank & File" b/w "Second Opinion"*: 7"

Pandemix is back at it again with a solid two-track 7" that delivers political and personal songs with contemporary urgency via an old school punk sound. I like how the band have progressed sonically, still shredding but now seemingly with more intention and wind in their sails. These tracks resonate a confidence and trajectory that leads me to believe that there will be much more where this came from. —Candace Hansen (Dirt Cult)

PARCH: *Self-titled*: CS

Debut demo tape from Jersey hardcore kids Parch. Musically hard to pin down, they fall in the range of tougher hardcore in the vein of Hoax, to powerviolence towards Charles Bronson. Yet, in all of that, they have some great classic East Coast-

sounding mosh parts. Great initial offering. —Steve Adamyk (Sin Eater)

PATSY'S RATS: *Singles*: LP

Sublime power pop from this Portland two-piece featuring the singer from Razorcake faves Mean Jeans and Patsy Gelb (daughter of desert country singer Howe Gelb). This LP is a singles collection but plays just fine as a long player—not a stinker in the bunch—lazy, shimmering power pop sounding like a stoned Fastbacks or some shit. These are the vibes that all the norm kids wish they had but are too stupid to find. I can see this pair getting "big," but for now they are ours and we should hold them close. The jam is "Is It Alright," which is tucked away in the middle of the flipside. This disc has been sitting on my record player since it arrived and I can't see it leaving anytime soon. —Tim Brooks (Bachelor)

PEGS, THE: *Lost at Sea*: LP

Eighteen years is a hell of a long time to be a band before your debut album comes out. Around the turn of the century, The Pegs were coming up in the heyday of Southern Californian beach punk. The Stitches, Smogtown, and Smut Peddlers were all in their prime and the rest of the world was taking notice. The Pegs were the new kids on the scene and opening shows left, right, and center. A couple of killer singles came out, and then they were gone. Or so we thought. At some point recently, The Pegs

woke up from their hibernation, and Hostage Records was there to release the album that should have come out what seems like a lifetime ago. Are they the same Pegs? Absolutely! These tracks feel like they could have been laid down back in the days when they were hungry kids new to the scene. That classic beach punk guitar coupled with a suburban snarl makes this another welcome notch in the Hostage belt. The Pegs may have been lost at sea, but they are home to port and are kicking ass! —Ty Stranglehold (Hostage)

PEZZ:

More than You Can Give Us: LP

Holy crap! I can't believe these dudes are still around and bringing some fire to the table as well! I think the last I heard from these guys was maybe a 7" that didn't really deliver the goods, but clearly Pezz got pissed about something and turned in what could be one of my top records of this quickly expiring year. Ten tracks of vital, political (personal and otherwise) punk rock that you shouldn't ignore. If you've followed Pezz at all you will be stoked, and if you've never heard them take a chance on this one kids; it's—how do you say—lit. —Garrett Barnwell (Truant)

PIG DESTROYER:

Head Cage: CD/LP/CS

Let's be honest: grindcore is never going to pay the bills, so it's not

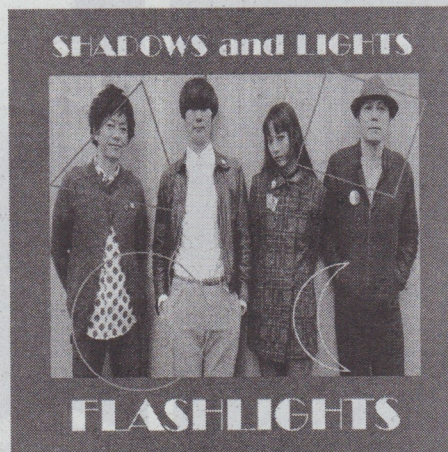
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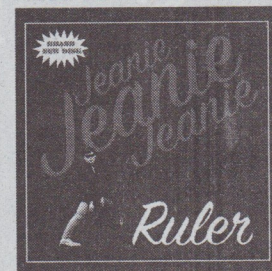
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surprising that Pig Destroyer take their time in between albums as they live their lives and try and sculpt their next masterpiece. That said, it's been six long years since their last release, *Book Burner*, which wasn't bad, but also didn't blow me away like their previous album, *Phantom Limb*, did. *Head Cage*, a twelve-song, half hour full-length, is another step along the path of growth of the band. Whereas early Pig Destroyer albums were short bursts of growled vocals, *Head Cage* finds the band creating great grooves on tracks like "Army of Cops" and "Mt. Skull" (to name two examples). JR Hayes' vocals are much more screamy than anything growling, as seen on prior albums. I prefer it, as well as the plentiful additions of Agoraphobic Nosebleed's vocalists, Richard Johnson and Kat Katz. I don't know if grindcore can ever be considered "accessible," but Pig Destroyer has made an album that is going to be as acceptable to any heavy music fan as anything they've previously released. At the same time, longtime fans will find the evolution of the band to be gradual enough so as to not turn them off. In fact, I imagine, like me, they'll very much enjoy *Head Cage*. —Kurt Morris (Relapse)

PIOUS FAULTS: Old Thread: LP

Rad Aussie punk comes forth from Pious Faults: straight forward

hardcore vocals over fast, melodic weirdcore punk beats. At times, it's monotonous, but for the most part, pretty damn good. —Camyllé Reynolds (Feel It)

PISSE / PERKY TITS: Split: 10"

If you were a teenager in 1983 and had a pen pal in Europe who sent you a cassette of their band practicing in their local equivalent of a basement, the odds are fairly good that if the tape survived the transatlantic journey unsmashed, it sounded reasonably similar to Perky Tits (minus the singing in German, since your pen pals would have probably been from Finland or Italy at that point). Decent, uptempo punk with invisible cymbals and either nonexistent or inaudible bass (the song where it stops sounding like a guitarist playing along with a drummer and starts sounding like a guitarist and bassist playing along with a drum machine is notable in how much better it sounds than everything else). Pisse start out sounding darkly wavey, then hit the gas and come out sounding like what might've happened if Joe Meek produced the first Discharge album and made them sing in German. Don't laugh, George Martin made the Beatles do it. BEST SONG: Pisse, "DunkelStrafe." BEST SONG TITLE: Perky Tits, "Drips of Pee." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The kids still love the *Smell the Glove* album cover, don't they? —Rev. Nørð (Phantom)

PREDATOR: No Face: 7"

Two-song slab of snotty, old school punk rock à la the Spits. Don't be a poser, just fucking check it out. —Chad Williams (Total Punk)

PREENING: Nice Dice: 7" EP

Another round of skronky punk from these Oakland noisemongers. Equal parts free jazz and classic Bay Area free punk, the four tracks here recall both *Trout Mask Replica* and Subterranean Records' more adventurous releases. Highly recommended for those who don't mind indulging in the not-quite-so-easily digestible. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fine Concepts, fineconcepts.org)

PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER:

Jackhammering Deathblow of Nightmarish Trepidation: LP

More pitch-perfect grind with some of those juicy death elements that get the blood flowing. PLF aren't exactly known as innovators, but they have made a name for themselves for their sheer intensity and what is now a fairly prolific output over the last eighteen-ish years. It's great to see this new release shows absolutely no sign of slowing down. Killer artwork, tastefully done on a white background, accompanies this raging beast of a record. —Ian Wise (Six Weeks)

PRISSTEENS, THE:

Demos & Rarities, Vol. 1: CS

This three-quarters-female quartet was the closest thing to the Muffs that

the East Coast emitted back in the '90s. While the attempted melding of girl-group sugarbeat vocals to punky instrumental crunchings can always, at bare minimum, lure in a certain stripe of rube, I must admit that the main reason I bought their *Scandal, Controversy and Romance* album twenty years ago was because they had the drummer from the Devil Dogs, Mighty Joe Vincent. I liked the record fine, but wasn't head-over-high-heels in love with it, as I thought it sounded like a somewhat too-shined-up version of what Long Gone John had been doing for a while over at Sympathy For The Record Industry, which was a concept that failed to excite me overmuch. These unearthed recordings knock that quasi-major sheen (they were signed to Herb Alpert's Almo Sounds label, same label as Garbage and the Sugarcubes) off The Rock quite nicely; much to mankind's delight, there's an ass-kickingly rough edge to the guitar that no one was able to sneak in and fuck with. Every now and again, the vocal pitch and timber make me wonder if anyone has shot a text to Kim Shattuck, asking if she still has all her DNA, but, honestly, if that's the worst thing someone can say about a record, you'd best get your wallet out. BEST SONG: "Outta Style." BEST SONG TITLE: "Oh Billy!" and "Oh Howard!", because they remind me of the "Oh Candy"/"Oh Caroline"/"Oh Claire" concept which ran through the first three

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Cheap Trick albums. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** It takes balls to lead an album off with a Creation cover, but I'm not sure why and I'm also not complaining. —Rev. Nørb (Girlsville)

PRISSTEENS, THE:
Demos & Rarities, Vol. 2: CS

Second verse, same as the first—but this time, even rawer sounding. You may question my standing as a red-blooded American boy over this statement, but what I like the most about this band is *Mighty Joe Vincent's* drumming. I love the way the guy's cymbals sound! His drumming sounds like Coke® used to taste when it came in the sixteen ounce glass returnable bottles and you drank about a quarter of it and put a stopper in the bottle and put it back in the fridge and then came back later and drank the rest when the temperature and carbonation were at their precisely most perfect levels, and it doesn't come like that anymore, so you gotta make do. These sessions go from sounding more or less like the last sessions to sounding like something with multiple toes in the Billy Childish gene pool, so, for pete's sake, don't jump off board now! Plus, come on, admit it—*everyone's* thought about doing "Teenage Kicks" as "Teenage Dicks" at some point in their life, but *The Prissteeens actually did it!* No further questions, your honor. **BEST SONG:** "Staten Island Queen."

BEST SONG TITLE: I suppose "I'm a Mess?" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Cover photo by Mick Rock, who was once David Bowie's official photographer. —Rev. Nørb (Girlsville)

PUPPY AND THE HAND JOBS:
I Eat Abortions: 7"

Sloppy garage pop with the comedy sensibility of The Dwarves. Doubt that it's an influence, but the opening track "I Eat Abortions" (which by design will have you singing the chorus before the song is over) reminds me a good deal of Personal And The Pizzas. Some of their songs feel eternal, as if they've been floating in the space of garage rock since its inception in the 1960s. "Trash Rock'n'Roll" in particular feels like it's a long lost garage party anthem for kids who are bad at throwing parties. I highly recommend this album if you are a kid who is bad at throwing parties, which I assume most of are deep down. —Bryan Static (Black Gladiator / Slovenly)

RADIO BUZZKILLS, THE /
HYPNIC JERKS, THE: Split: 7"

Radio Buzzkills split the difference between Screeching Weasel and NOFX or between Lookout! and Fat Wreck Chords, however one might want to put it. Better produced than the average Mutant Pop single from two decades ago, but I have been burned out on this sound for nearly that long. Very well done for the

style, if you cannot get enough of it. They really bring the Texas band Bickley to mind the more I listen to them. Hypnic Jerks are more Squirtgun-sounding but still in that mid-'90s style. Pop punk addicts will find a whole lot to like here, to be sure. —Mike Frame (Milkstop)

RANDOM CONFLICT: Ruin-Nation: CD
Stick with me for a moment—this band sounds like if Sabbath and Metallica started a street punk band. It's tough as hell, catchy and melodic, ridiculously fast, and sometimes sludgy. They've got a heavy groove running throughout the release, and they play with time signatures, which I always appreciate. The vocalist mostly does a shouted singing, but here and there he also drops into this low, fierce growl. A lot of the songs venture towards hardcore, especially in the breakdowns / bridges / chorus. But the overall sound I get out of it is heavy metal street punk that's rather angry. Take that for what you will. It's a pummeling in a good way. Like when a massage therapist chops at your back but they also have studded gauntlets on. —Kayla Greet (No Profit)

RAVAGERS: Drowning in Blood: 7"
Third single from this Baltimore band. Two rippers here that clock in at less than three minutes each, so it will be done before your mac and cheese is ready in the microwave. Which is hotter? Take a listen for

the answer. Four leather-clad semi-hooligans playing straight up punk rock? Count me in. —Sean Koeppenick (Spaghetti Town)

REBEL SET, THE: Smidgen Pigeon: LP
I don't profess to be a garage rock expert. My knowledge of the classic '60s bands doesn't get any deeper than the Sonics, the Pretty Things, The Wailers, and The Monks. That said, the Rebel Set lean more toward The Animals' vein of '60s-inspired rock'n'roll, with plenty of organ in the mix. This group not only has the sound dialed in, they have good songs—the one thing that so many retro bands lack. If any of the aforementioned bands appeal to you, or if you're looking to add some variety to your record collection, this just might be the record for you. —Chad Williams (Outro)

RESONDING NO:
Gross Dominance: CS

If you're into really super-fuzzed-out indie DIY noise pop records, then this might just be for you. Tons of reverb and distortion are layering everything here, and still the songs really come through with their hooks galore. The vocals are layered and weaving throughout with lots of harmonies that only add to the really great, super catchy songs. The only thing wrong with this is that it's too short. Super into it. —Mark Twistworthy (State Champion)



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RULER: Jeanie, Jeanie, Jeanie: 7"

Ruler snuck up on me earlier this year with a super-limited debut 7" and this one here (their second and equally as limited) almost got away from me as well. Here's what you need to know: Ruler is fucking great. Fink from Teengenerate is on guitar, and he is and isn't the focal point (to me, the singer is usually the focal point). Most of my comparisons will be to Teengenerate and their related projects, as I know them best of all the bands the various members have been in. There's much the same punk energy as Teengenerate but the recordings aren't blown out (not as clean as some Raydios releases, but the added fidelity gives the low end some real heft). There's a power pop sensibility but it's different than Firestarter. The A-side is a super-charged Eddie Cochran cover, the B-side is an ode to carefree days gone by. Here's hoping a full length comes down the pike before too long. —Sal Lucci (Secret Mission / Mangrove)

RULER: Jeanie Jeanie Jeanie: 7"

What we have here is a seriously rockin' single from a Japanese band featuring Fink from Teengenerate. The power pop sound that he seems to have been obsessed with for the last two decades is gone with this band. Serious rock'n'roll vibes are happening and I could not be happier about it! As much as I like Raydios and Firestarter, I have been waiting for the more rockin' side of Fink to

make an appearance for a long time. It's top shelf rockin' punk from a master songwriter. Everything on this label is great and this is yet another fantastic addition. —Mike Frame (Secret Mission / Mangrove)

RULER: Jeanie, Jeanie, Jeanie: 7"

This new band featuring Fink from Teengenerate has released their second single containing two more serious punk'n'rollers. "Jeanie, Jeanie, Jeanie" is an overdriven rock and roller containing Chuck Berry riffs and a harmonica. "(It's Not) Saturday Night" circles the Firestarter nucleus a bit more with a decisively power pop chorus. Ruler are doling out songs two at a time. If you're into this scene you shouldn't drag your feet. The single is a banker. —Billups Allen (Secret Mission / Mangrove)

SAILOR POON:**B-Sides and Rarities: CS**

Austin's Sailor Poon is one of the best of America's current garage bands. Oddly akin to Spider Babies, except for the fact that Sailor Poon is all female. Both the CD and CS versions of this are already sold out as of this writing, so hopefully someone will put it out on vinyl, where it belonged in the first place. It's a fantastic analog recording, which adds to the magic of it all. Goofy and rough around the edges, the way garage punk should be. Sailor Poon is where it's at, as this decade starts to near its close. —Art Ettinger (Self-released)

SCARBORO:**Wolves on the Radio: CDEP**

The Brooklyn, N.Y. trio Scarboro formed in 2012 around the core of guitarist/vocalist Shi Heng Shi, and bassist/vocalist Jack Counce. Since then, the band has gone through a string of drummers at a rate rivaling Spinal Tap's. Eric Dean is credited as the person behind the kit on their latest EP *Wolves on the Radio*. The EP is a catchy blend of melodic punk and hardcore that doesn't stray too far from its influences, but is also more than the sum of its parts. Scarboro sound just as at home in a basement in '98 as they would in 2018. Call that timeless if you'd like, I just call it good music. —Paul J. Comeau (WTF)

SIAL: Binasa: 7"

It's great to have so many labels consistently releasing good music and LVEUM is one that I consider to be doing this. This single is one of my favorite LVEUM releases of recent years, as I really like the forceful belligerence that this Singapore-based group hammers out over ten minutes. It's fast and furious with reverb-ridden vocals creating a riotous noise. A really good single, following on from last year's equally good 12"EP. —Rich Cocksedge (La Vida Es Un Mus)

SICK BURN: Demo: CS

It's not often you hear a demo from a band whose music is perfectly suited for the format. Sick Burn offer

less than fifteen minutes of blazing speed and indignant anger with on-the-edge-of-but-not-quite-melodic vocals, aided by a lightning quick rhythm section. It's over before you can even begin to miss it. When it's gone, the ghost of something missing haunts a place you didn't realize existed. Normally, I'd try to draw connection points to more widely known bands, but I can't put my finger on it. If you like fast—not entirely discordant—music, this one is worth a listen. —Bryan Static (Self-released, sickburn.bandcamp.com)

SISKA + MARSZALEK:**Patriotyzm Jutra: LP**

This is quite the combo. My Polish is nonexistent, though I gather this is a split between two artists. On the A side there's mid-tempo grungey punk with fuzzy, distorted bass and spitfire vocals. I like it quite a bit. However, the B side could easily be the stuff of terrifying nightmares or whimsical, carnival-inspired daydreams. For me, it's pretty eerie and slightly unsettling. I appreciate the way they rush toward weird art punk and truly are not scared to try anything and everything. This "song" is over fifteen minutes long and could easily be the soundtrack to a haunted house. It's really all over the place—some spoken word samples, laugh tracks, synth dance beats, growling, screaming, power tools, et cetera. Sometimes I feel like I'm a fly on the wall of an exorcism. Even if I could understand the Polish

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lyrics and spoken word, I don't know that I'd have much more clarity about what is happening on this record. As creepy and weird and confusing this is, I applaud them for truly doing whatever the fuck they want. That is more punk than most. Additional bonus points for having such weird and cool cover art. —Kayla Greet (Melina Crew / Pasażer)

SLOKS: *Holy Motor*: CD

I'm always excited to get a new release from Voodoo Rhythm Records; they keep a tight ship of what fits the label. Sloks are pure Voodoo Rhythm: they're noisy, static-y, fuzzy, cheap beer, and poorly insulated garage rock. John Waters would highly approve of this record. —Ryan Nichols (Voodoo Rhythm)

SPECIAL MOVES: *July*: CS

July is the seventh in a monthly cassette series from Reflective Tapes. I think that's a pretty cool idea. Getting a special tape every month sounds dope. It's also ambitious as hell. They market the release for fans of Springsteen and Shellshag. I can definitely pick up the Boss's influence, especially on "What I Wanna Du," and of course the song "We Could Cover Springsteen." The second track, "Chili Dishin'" is an instrumental. I think I like the intentions behind this release more than the songs themselves. They're just a little sloppy and not in a way that's endearing to me. However,

there are elements that I really enjoy such as the gated snare in "Don't Care," the vocal distortion, and the bass sound throughout the release. Overall, not really my thing, but I could see it being someone else's, for sure. —Kayla Greet (Reflective Tapes)

SPIT-TAKE: *Falling Star*: CS

This is very listenable and pleasant indie rock/punk filled up with a mix of catchy pop punkish moments, some late-'90s Midwestern emo influence, and other seemingly solid influences. I would likely use Superchunk as a reference point here, but instead with a layer of DIY basement punk anti-sheen covering the whole thing, which takes the slickness down a notch and puts this right in my wheelhouse. Good stuff. —Mark Twistworthy (Reflective Tapes)

SPOILERS: *Roundabouts*: LP/CD

If I were able to harness the energy emitting from my speakers whilst the debut album from Spoilers was playing, then I am sure I would be able to provide power to a small village in my homeland of Wales for a month. *Roundabouts* contains a dozen songs, all fizzing with melodicism and maintaining a relentless drive throughout. It's a credit to everything Spoilers has done, for the main comparison that comes to my mind being Snuff, even down to the use of a Hammond organ to add some beautiful depth to

the tracks. Top notch melodic punk. —Rich Cocksedge (Little Rocket / SBAM / Brassneck / Boss Tuneage)

SPOWDER: *Health Palm*: LP

New Jersey punk rock band with a unique sound. Tunes are driving 'n' loud with more than a hint of garage in 'em, but there's also a bit of swampy, artsy shenanigans in evidence, which gives things an interesting tweak. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (State Champion)

SRIRACHA-CHAS, THE:

Treason EP: CD

From the start—singer Kevin shouting "TREASON!"—you know what you're getting from this Geneva, N.Y. three-piece. The Sriracha-chas play furious mid-tempo punk, simultaneously railing against injustice and inviting the listener to join them. These cats are inviting you to be part of their crusade with their screeds against power. If you have a voice—and you do—then sing along, or, like them, be a threat by example and get yourself out there to follow their lead. —Michael T. Fournier (Girth)

STIFF LOVE: *Attitude*: 7"

Two slightly abrasive, yet catchy, tunes here. Things are kept in the mid-tempo, the band bashes about on the line between garage and early punk, with a solid rock'n'roll undertow giving things some torque. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feel It)

STRAFPLANET: *Freizeitstress*: LP

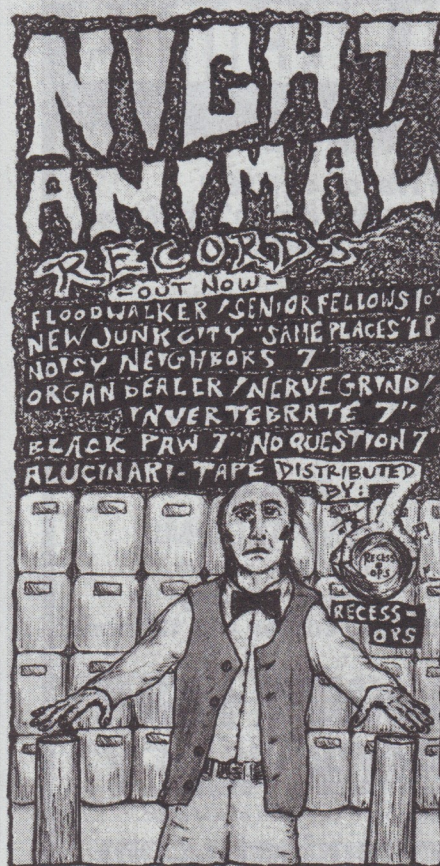
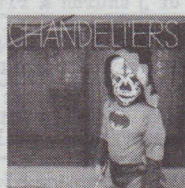
Noisy Austrians intent on using a pummeling sound to render listeners shell-shocked. Yep, that's my strapline for this excellent album. It's nothing fancy and it doesn't seek to reinvent punk rock, the wheel, or even pizza; it's just a straight-up, blistering frenzy of punk. What I really like about this is that it's packed with intensity but doesn't get bogged down by everything bleeding into itself, making it an indecipherable mess. It sounds fresh and invigorating, and at times reminds me of No Statik. —Rich Cocksedge (Contraszt!, diyordie.net)

STROPPIES, THE:

"Maddest Moments" b/w "Architectural Charades": 7"

The Stroppies are naturals when it comes to slightly warped jangle and low-key but noticeable pop. The two songs on "Maddest Moments" are subdued but very much alive. They explore anxiety in a kind of "Kotton Krown" mode on the title track, and then ponder (and celebrate?) ugly architecture on the B-side. They glide so effortlessly and layer so well, it's easy to miss how complex and deliberate and full of personality the songs really are. Feels slightly weird to be so amped on such a mellow band, but here I am dancing to these songs that feel like shrugs. —Matt Werts (Tough Love)

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STRUGGLE, THE:
Banging My Head: CD

I like this U.K. bunch a whole lot. They dig into their oi/street punk history but toughen it up with some NYHC/later Agnostic Front vibes. This disc is a one-off limited deal with a couple of released tracks and a few unreleased including a tremendous Reducers SF cover, giving a nod to their influences. Not sure on the availability, but I'm sure if you hit the band up you can track it down. Top drawer goods. -Tim Brooks (Self-released)

STUPID DAIKINI, THE:
Everything Is Fine: LP

Guitar and uke heavy with dynamic, emotive vocals, The Stupid Daikini are serving some Sleater-Kinney realness routed through big pop rock moves. Heart wrenching, this record has the honesty of a riot grrrl bedroom project while maintaining a bit more of a punk-inspired rock sound. It's personal and introspective; sad while retaining a driving energy that leads you to believe that, despite all the darkness present, everything will be okay. -Candace Hansen (It's Alive)

SUEDE RAZORS:
All The Hits...and Misses: CD

Collection of singles put out by this band from 2014-2017. Most of the collected covers feature a big boot. Maybe one that will kick me in the head if I don't listen? Don't worry boys, you have my attention. "Rubies

and Pearls" and "Berlin or Bust" are standouts on this sixteen-song release. Chances of nick and bruises are minimal here. -Sean Koepenick (Pirates Press)

SUPER THIEF:
Eating Alone in My Car: 12" EP

Who among us hasn't eaten alone in their car? I'll be the first to raise my hand and say I've done it plenty, every time by choice. Sometimes you have to travel for work and you don't want to eat crappy fast food, so you bring something and eat it in the parking lot. Other times, maybe you need to get the fuck outside of your work place, and there's nowhere to drive to get away, so you just have lunch in your car. Based on the music Super Thief makes and the intensity of their live shows, you'd think they personify that loner co-worker who always seems angry, but in real life they're pretty nice guys. Don't tell them I said that. Much of what I've read about Super Thief describes them as a noise rock band. They use elements of noise in their songwriting (feedback, fuzz, string wailing) but the songs have actual structure and do rock. This here record is a five-song blast of power, angular with sudden tempo and time changes. There's a touch of Scratch Acid and a pinch of labels like Touch and Go or Amphetamine Reptile. The entirety of side two is taken up by "You Play It Like a Joke But I Know You Really Mean It" clocking in at over nine minutes. My music attention span

has been ruined by twenty-five years of listening to punk rock, but this song is dynamic enough (and anchored by a pretty sinister bass groove) to keep me interested. Is it weird that I think of Gary Numan's "Cars" when I hear this song? So seek Super Thief's releases out, or better yet see them live when they come to your town. They'll make you forget that you'll be eating lunch by yourself in your car come Monday. -Sal Lucci (Learning Curve)

SWANSONG: Glue: CD

Punk rock with a heavy '90s indie/grunge influence. Although musically this is a treat, with well-written songs that do the loud/quiet thing really well, the crowning glory are Nat's vocals. They are both soulful and abrasive in equal measure, perfect for when Swansong shifts gears. The whole package reminds me of Magnapop, a band I listened to a lot twenty-odd years ago and one I need to get back to soon. One other thing to note is that the final track, "Sunbathe," would have fitted perfectly in the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and also not been out of place on the show's soundtrack album. I say that as a fan of the series rather than in a derogatory sense. -Rich Cocksedge (Autonomonster / Charlie's Big Ray Gun / Pumpkin)

SWEATY: Self-titled: CS

This band contains folks who have spent time in the Screaming Females and Sass Dragons and contains seven

catchy-as-heck, super fun punk/pop songs. Some are more traditional "power pop"-sounding, while others have a more Midwest basement punk feel, and then there are full-on, traditional-sounding, up-tempo pop punk-ish ones... but it all works. This is good, seek it out. -Mark Twistworthy (State Champion)

SWINGIN' UTTERS:
Peace and Love: LP/CD

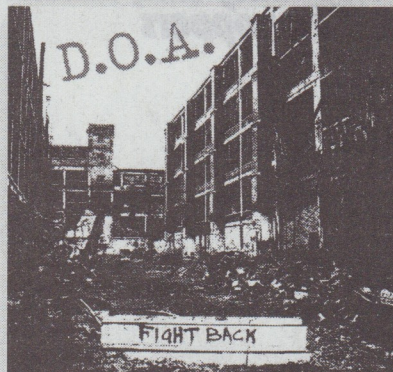
What can I say about this band at this point? A good place to start is the bass tone, it's perfect. The songs on here seem effortless. They can start with something so infectious and driving like, "Undertaker, Undertake," and immediately change the whole tone, going into a song like, "Sirens." The latter has the wavy pop aesthetic reminiscent of Foo Fighters. Unclench your fist, read the album title—I mean that in a positive way—these guys have been writing songs long enough to make any type of record they want and that's just what they've done. I'd be bored if they still were trying to make the same record over and over. Thank goodness for punk rock that's not afraid to mature. -Ryan Nichols (Fat)

SWINGIN' UTTERS:
Peace and Love: LP/CD

With the fury and unrelenting self-effacement of opener "Undertaker Undertake" and the buoyant catchiness of "Human Potential" (Seriously! There's handclaps! There's a chorus straight outta *Five*

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Lessons Learned! It's the best song on the record!), I was floored to see I'd gotten this for review. Love the band, and was thrilled to hear them claim they'd written a pointedly political record this time around. Swingin' Utters excoriating American politics? *Fuck yes.* But after a number of listens, I'm bummed to say that it falls a little short for me personally. There are a few songs that could be considered political ("Yes, I Hope He Dies" is written about who you think it's written about), and there are those previously mentioned jawdropper tracks, but then there's songs like "Sleeping," which comes across as atonal and jarring (and most likely intentionally so). Kudos should be given to the band for continuing to evolve their sound into something entirely their own and staunchly refusing to repeat themselves. Decades into their existence, they're still relentlessly experimenting. It's just that only rarely on *Peace and Love* do those two roads—rad tunes and successful experimentation—seem to intersect. Like I said, I love the band. I just wish this album had a bit more cohesion and ferocity than it does. —Keith Rosson (Fat)

SYSTEMATIC DEATH: *Systema Eleven: 7"*

Japanese thrashcore of the highest order. Like a mythological beast, Systematic Death is a force not known within the dull confines of civil society. Rising once again they

employ a fierceness and velocity which cannot be challenged. How often does a band with a back catalog that's stacked with classics dating back to the mid-'80s still fuckin' rip this hard? —Daryl (Six Weeks)

TERRITORIES: Self-titled: CD

Last issue I reviewed a picture flexi from these guys. Now I have the whole album. My thoughts are generally the same. Solid tunes that really remind me of *Hopeless Romantic*-era Bouncing Souls with maybe a touch of Riverboat Gamblers thrown in for good measure. Well written and well produced, I'm not surprised at all the positive comments out there about this album. The whole picture flexi for each song on the album is still boggling my mind. They all look really great! It is really cool to see guys I remember back from the '90s still out there and doing something cool. I look forward to the chance to see them play. —Ty Stranglehold (Pirates Press)

TERRY: *I'm Terry: LP*

What are Terry? Are they the only (or one of the only) truly masterful poetic/politic bands of the late '10s? Are they minimal psychedelic realists? Are they exemplars of insular post-punk logic? Are they the most visceral by being the most composed? I know I'm grateful for the yearly gift of a new Terry album, and the feeling of hearing a band that is engaged with the political/social/cultural moment

and who are also musically subtle and layered and inviting. They're so many things at once and also solely themselves, unassuming and visionary craftspeople talking about the surveillance state and traffic and the prison system (among other things), making you dance, bringing light and air into the room. —Matt Werts (Upset The Rhythm)

TIGHT NIGHT: Volume: CD

This one is quite simple. Born and bred in Chicago, with some Californian help thrown in, Tight Night hits hard and swiftly gets me on board. Twin guitars screech, wail, and lay down some thick, rocking riffs whilst assault and battery is the name of the game for the rhythm section, creating just enough of a gap for some larynx-destroying vocals. Does it matter that the band includes members of The Bomb, Airstream Futures, The Missing 23rd, and Stalag 13? It shouldn't but it gives an idea of the pedigree of those members. This record kicks ass and rocks like a good 'un, which is all you really need to know. —Rich Cocksedge (Little Rocket)

TOMMY & THE COMMIES: *Here Come...: CD*

Those familiar with the scene in the Northern Canadian city of Sudbury, Ontario, Canada would have at some point—one way or another—come across the Houle brothers. Jeff and Mitch have been at it for years, and are most certainly the jewel of "the

big nickel" (Sudbury is traditionally a mining town). Being with Statues, Strange Attractor, Mick Futures, Varge and now the topical Tommy And The Commies, these two can interchange between instruments and nail each of them flawlessly. Now backing Tommy, with Jeff on bass/vox and Mitch on drums, it seems like a match made in heaven. Something about this current project just works. Originally a four piece, they've now paired it down to three, which somehow seems to work even better. *Here Come...*, not unlike the Statues records, is heavily U.K.-influenced. These eight tunes have a very specific Jam/Buzzcocks sound to them, and most importantly, is far from anything cliché or corny. Which, it's important to note, is extremely difficult to do when attacking this sound, so credit given when due. The production isn't intentionally über vintage sounding, but is thin enough and clean enough where it suits the sound just right. "Hurtin' Boys" and "Permanent Fixture" are the current tracks that seem to be in my head most frequently, but there isn't anything close to a dud here. I could go on, but I won't. Heavy contender for the record of the year. —Steve Adamyk (Slovenly)

TRANSIENT + BASTARD NOISE: *Sources of Human Satisfaction: LP*

I'm new to the Transient game but that's totally my loss. I wasn't yet privy to their absurdly brilliant spin

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on crusty grindcore which bridges the gap between Dystopia, Buzzoven, Phobia, and Shank. Alone, Transient's musical prowess is just one maniacally brutal beatdown after another, but paired with the genius knob twisting and circuit bending of powerviolence godfather Eric Wood (AKA Bastard Noise), the insanity reaches higher levels of otherworldly bliss that can only be appreciated by true skull servants and powerviolence freaks. Amazing Pettibon-esque artwork accentuates a true modern extreme music classic that centuries from now will surely be in a museum guarded by grindcore ninja robots who fuel only on the flesh of the fascist, racist, sexist, transphobic and any other similar waste of life. —Juan Espinosa (Six Weeks)

TRAUMA 84: *Patchut Silenosti: 7"*

New crust, all the way from Czech Republic. This is a great record full of two-minute crusty jams with really catchy guitars and some female vocals sung in Czech. If you're a fan of Perfect Pussy, Gouge Away, or White Lung and wanna get into something newer and foreign, this is a good start. —Ryan Nichols (Deadly Illness, traumapunk@seznam.cz)

TROUBLE BOYS: *My Own Way: 7"*

Trouble Boys are a trio of swinging power chord slingers from Austin. "My Own Way" is a mid-tempo rocker with classically distorted guitars framing a catchy chorus.

"Rock N Roll Is Dead" is a Rubinoos cover with the line "rock n roll is dead/ and we don't care" delivered in blasé-er than life fashion by the Trouble Boys. Great cover. I always thought The Rubinoos deserve better than their dollar-bin status. You can still find Rubinoos LPs cheap if you're interested. And keep an eye out for Trouble Boys as well. Both songs on this single are excellent: snotty and overdriven. Wicked. —Billups Allen (Sweetheart)

T.S.O.L.: *Low Low Low: 7"*

The band continues to put out quality product right after *The Trigger Complex* is still fresh. It's the same producer as that record, so it's unclear if these two songs were outtakes from those sessions. I'm not complaining since both songs are superb. Looks like more touring next year so hopefully I will get to hear these songs live. Move it if you want this, as it is a limited run. —Sean Koepenick (Dink)

TWIN PIGS:

Scandinavian Nightmare: LP/CD

Does anyone fancy a bit of Rocket From The Crypt mixed with some angry synth-driven electronic music, maybe a few notches down from Atari Teenage Riot? If so, then Twin Pigs should be right up your street. I really enjoyed Twin Pigs' 2016 long player *Chaos, Baby!* and have similar feelings towards *Scandinavian Nightmare* after just the one play. It's

energetic, pissed off, and offers both gruffness and poppiness via the triple vocals employed. This is an effective combination blending a lightness with a more aggressive counterpoint for a cracking sophomore album from these Swedes. —Rich Cocksedge (Luftsloot)

ULICZNY OPARYSEK: *Na Zawsze Punk 2: LP*

So as far as I can tell, this is the second collection of cover songs by Uliczny Opryszek. They cover material by a bunch of formative Polish punk and hardcore bands—Inkwizycja, Bush Doctor, Pancer, Absurd, Paranoja, to name a few—with almost the entirety of them coming from the '80s and '90s. While the concept reeks of a band entirely out of ideas, this is actually really fun and inspiring, and these guys are clearly paying homage to folks that came before them. Comes with extensive liner notes about each of the bands and their songs, as well as lyrics and original photos of both Uliczny Opryszek and the folks they covered. Didn't really think I'd get far with this, but it's an obvious labor of love, and I really enjoyed it. —Keith Rosson (Pasażer)

UNCLE KURTIS:

Let's Kill Uncle Kurtis: CD

The immediate comparison that came to mind is that Uncle Kurtis have a style very akin to the Dead Milkmen, but much more raw and dark, with overt jazz forays at times. I'm on the fence about this—sometimes I get into

it, and sometimes I don't. Uncle Kurtis stray into the land of the experimental with some of their songs—which for me is almost always hit or miss. In this case it doesn't hit the bullseye, but does land in the yellow. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Girth)

UNHOLY TWO: *The Pleasure to End All Pleasures: LP*

Sludgey, gritty nightmare fuel. Make sure you're in a healthy mental state before jumping into these shark-infested waters, otherwise Uholy Two will tear you up. Somehow, the whole situation is made more uneasy that there are three people in a band called Unholy Two. It's like one of them is maybe trustworthy, but you can't sort out who it is. Their music is like if you took a billion blenders full of rocks and broken glass, pressure formed them into a diamond, and then jack hammered your way to the center while blindfolded. The blenders are all running on full pulse the whole time as well. Frightening noise rock with layers of gore and bleakness is what you're in store for here. Perfect timing for the Halloween season, though I imagine that if this is the type of thing that makes your black heart sing, you'd be spinning this year round. —Kayla Greet (12XU)

UNIFORMS: *Reasons to Breathe: 7"*

This three-track affair marks the return of Scottish outfit Uniforms, a band that has been on hiatus for a few years. Lead track "Get Me out of Here" begins with

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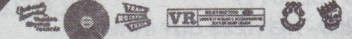
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an intro which reminds me of that on Stiff Little Fingers' "Falling Down" and then kicks on into an anthemic rocker that does its job perfectly. The remaining songs don't have the same quality as the opener but still manage to maintain my interest. A decent return. —Rich Cocksedge (TNS / Make That A Take)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Friends of the Family Man: CD

I have no idea what is going on here. There are four "bands" that are doing spoken word versions of one song each by Black Flag, Born Against, Poison Idea, and Rollins Band. I've never heard of these "bands" (Recessions, Piss Piss Piss, Fucked For Life, and Voice To The Useless) and the spoken word voice sounds quite similar from track to track. The cover of this CD has the artwork from Black Flag's *Family Man* cover but with Henry Rollins' face imposed over the gunman's head and Glenn Danzig walking through the room with groceries and kitty litter. Don't worry; I'm just as confused as you are. —Kurt Morris (Dark Water)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Live Your Gimmick: Vol. 1: CD

A four band sampler of groups from Maryland. As this is where I was born and raised, I was pleasantly surprised to see this come out of my pile of goodies. The Driving Beats distill the best of the *Nuggets*-era bands and make their own sound. Sourpuss

is more straight-ahead '70s punk. The Downstrokes actually remind me of another Maryland band—the legendary Black Market Baby. The Xiles round out the collection here. There is a Johnny Rotten tinge to their vocals but this shows promise. The whole ball of wax is put together by the most famous wrestling manager since Lou Albano. —Sean Koepenick (Tuna Forsushi)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Turn It Around:

The Story of East Bay Punk: 2 x LP

You know, before listening to this comp, I'd have thought the soundtrack would just basically be *The Thing that Ate Floyd* meets *Life in the Fat Lane* with a bit of *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*. But much like the accompanying documentary, I was pleasantly surprised. It's pretty rare that someone takes a microscope to a subculture you're involved in and gets it right. They can't all be *The Decline of Western Civilization*. I pre-ordered the DVD and double LP as soon as I was able to and I have to say I was not at all disappointed. A little shocked to see Sammytown and Fang involved in the project, but is it really an East Bay doc without them? I can appreciate their dedication to tell a full story. The soundtrack is quite literally a reflection of the film. These are the whole version of songs that only got a snippet in the movie. It doesn't just zero in on Gilman bands or MRR bands. They start out in the early '70s and lay down roots

for the East Bay like The Tubes, Psycotic Pineapple, and Crime before focusing on Crimpshrine, Tilt, and MDC. I love this comp because it doesn't pretend that East Bay punk only existed in one time or one place. It's a quick history lesson of a scene of bands who were very much aware of each other. I also really appreciate that many of the songs are specific to the area: "Condition Oakland," "Berkeley Is My Baby," "The List," "At Gilman Street." Finally someone took the care to do it with punks in mind. —Kayla Greet (1-2-3-4 Go!)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Typical Girls Volume 4: LP

Lately, I haven't been a big fan of shows or collections that center on collecting artists by gender, but the through line for Emotional Response Records is more curatorial than essentialist, celebrating freaky and innovative artists around the globe and putting them in dialogue with one another. It's fitting that the collection is named *Typical Girls*. The bands that are showcased emanate many elements of The Slits in subtle and stabbing ways. The complexity hidden as simplicity in bands like Schande and Mommy Long Legs, the pure punk energy of Chroma and Republica, and the experimental dance of Cocteau Latex all fit in this legacy. Let's also address the elephant in the room, it is still more difficult for women and queers to get our records put out, so a comp like

this is still doing double work. This is a really great collection; I can't wait for Volume 5. —Candace Hansen (Emotional Response)

WARCHILD: Haunting Images of Human Tragedy: LP

Straight-up Discharge imagery and a sound like an enormous door slamming in the depths of hell. Sounds less Discharge and more Swedish kang/Råpunk, like Totalitär or Japanese bands like Framtid. Fast as fuck, raw as fuck. Why reinvent the fucking wheel? I'm in. —Tim Brooks (Blackwater)

WOOD CHICKENS: Bits: CS

Madison Wis.'s Wood Chickens return with a few instrumental jams, some live cuts, and some acoustic tracks of their insanely fun take on cowpunk. This is more of an odds and ends collection than a proper release so while I, previously having been exposed to their excellent *Countrycide* LP, can appreciate the weirdness of an intentionally slow down version of their song "Guys in Big Trucks," (sounds like a 45 played at 33) I can't imagine anyone instantly becoming a fan with this cassette as a starting point. I suggest tracking down the *Countrycide* album to listen to a southern fried version of a Minutemen/Hüsker Dü/Meat Puppets hootenanny and then giving *Bits* a shot. —Juan Espinosa (Push And Pull)



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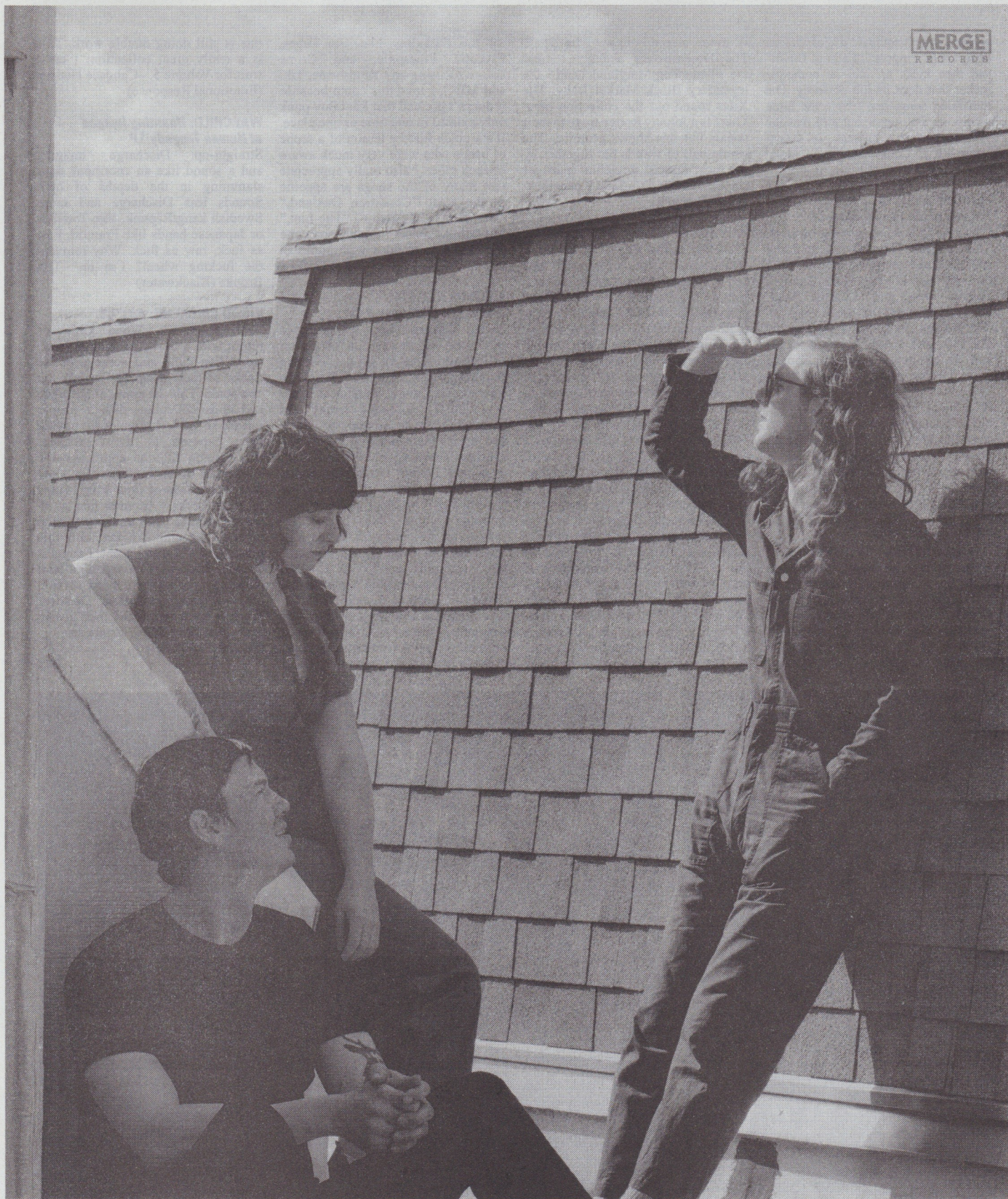
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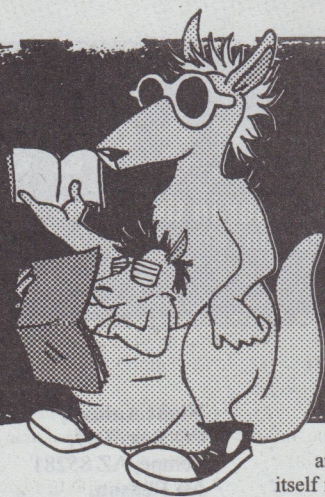
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One of the best zines out there right now.

—Michael T. Fournier
MINOR LEAGUES #6

ADVENTURES OF PUNK BIRD, THE #1

\$1.50 or trade, 4¼" x 5½", copied, 15 pgs.

This series covers the adventures of Punk Bird (not just a clever title). In this issue, the first in the series, the bird is bummed, thinking he doesn't have any friends. Meanwhile, he's constantly rejecting friends wanting him to hang out because he's too elitist to do anything he doesn't want to do. He decides to throw a wild party (inviting all the friends he doesn't have) to bolster up his social life. —Craven Rock (PunkBird352@gmail.com)

BROKEN PENCIL #79, \$7.95, 8½" x 11", offset, 72 pgs.

If you're not familiar with *Broken Pencil*, it's Vancouver's magazine of zine culture and all things DIY—all that's worth knowing about, anyway. Besides reviews of zines, indie lit, and independent art, this issue has a feature on deaf zinemakers and another on how to make it tabling a zine event without getting overwhelmed with anxiety. I found the latter irritatingly petty. Yeah, it's awkward and uncomfortable at zine events. Life is pain! Attention is focused on a contest called Deathmatch where short stories are pitted against each other in an online arena. The winners are reproduced here; most of them are of a sci-fi nature. I can't say I was blown away by them, but they were worth my time. So, the features are kind of hit or miss, but their review section is spot on as usual. —Craven Rock (Broken Pencil, PO Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2S7, Canada, brokenpencil.com)

BROKEN PENCIL #80, \$7.95, 8½" x 11", full color, 64 pgs.

Broken Pencil is a Canadian zine that focuses on independent arts and runs the gambit covering zine culture, reviews, and comics, along with interesting and sometimes oddball fictional short stories and columns. Issue 80 features an article covering webcomic platforms (something that I'm not all too familiar with but found pretty intriguing), urban foraging, and a few short stories, most notably the emotional and quirky "Whatever This Is, It's Something" by Nicole Chin, about a father leaving his family to "find himself" and the emotional fallout and eventual peace that follows. Chin writes, "I spent two days trying to channel my energies into hating my father, but it didn't last long. Hating people is exhausting business." Kind of a kitschy, cool addition to this mag was the 3D glasses that gives a bit of depth to graphics and adds a bit to the intrigue. *Broken Pencil* has lush pictures of mixed media from submitting artists, colorful and cheeky comics, and very thorough and thoughtful zine, book, and independent music reviews. I'm not sure out how essential this magazine might be for punks, but I can say it was enjoyable to thumb through. Plus I dig the glasses. —Camille Reynolds (Broken Pencil, PO Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2S7, Canada, brokenpencil.com)

DANNY MARTIN'S TUCSON MURALS, \$10, 5½" x 8½", copied, 28 pgs.

From the pretty straightforward title (which, by the way, is actually *A Very Incomplete Collection of Danny Martin's Tucson Murals*), this photo collage zine is page after page of local muralist Danny Martin's murals around Tucson, Ariz. Printed in black and white, we see a wide range of Danny's art, with commissions, western heroes, murals advertising music shows for the Rialto Theatre—it looks like Danny is one busy muralist. The screen printed cover to the zine is also a nice bonus. —Tricia Ramos (Danny Martin's Tucson Murals, bullmooseallstar@yahoo.com)

DEAR SENTIDA, \$5, 5½" x 8½", LaserJet, 12 pgs.

Dear Sentida was short but sweet. I got to the last page and was pretty pissed that it didn't continue, but then I thought that maybe that's a sign that I really liked it and I wanted it to continue. It's Bay Area artist Breena Nuñez's personal tale in the lens of an anthropomorphic crocodile, dealing with the annoyance and awkwardness of getting asked out in public. It's something that I can't even fathom anymore, as the idea of asking anyone out is ridiculous and

anxiety-ridden to me. The art is charming and well-made, and the zine itself is funny as hell. It's the first I've seen of this artist and I want to read more of these comics, so it is very recommended. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Breena Nuñez, technicolormorena@gmail.com)

EARTH FIRST! JOURNAL, Vol. 38 No. 1, 8" x 10½", newsprint, 64 pgs.

Again, *EF Journal* gives us news of environmental liberation struggles throughout the world. Some of the features in this issue get into defending wild buffalo in Yellowstone National Park, then there's an update on what's happening with the La ZAD in France, an occupation that turned into autonomous communal land that's constantly defending itself from The State. There's also a feature on anti-pipeline struggles taking place in New York. The most interesting article—and one that made me livid—was about lawsuits taken out on anti-DAPL activists and the COINTELPRO-style tactics used against them, from infiltration to trumped up gun charges. I like how *EFJ* gets more intersectional every issue. It's all one fight! —Craven Rock (Earth First! Journal, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460, collective@earthfirstjournal.org)

GUNK #1, \$8, 6¾" x 6½", LaserJet, 40 pgs.

My face has melted to a great degree. I've felt my body turned to slime, and it was disgusting and amazing. I thank *Gunk Vol. 1* for making me feel this way. In the spirit of classic Cold War era artists like Will Eisner, C.C. Beck, or even Bob Montana, this comic zine has a nostalgic spirit that is really appealing to the eyes. It hits my every being with that nostalgia stick for a time I never grew up with. It's strange, gross, and beautiful. The stories included have wicked turns, and put you in the shoes of some of the weirdest individuals. Sit back, relax, and get taken into a world where The Blob wasn't a film, but a reality. —Iggy Nicklbottum (Curt Merlo, curtmerlo.com)

LIVE FAST DIE, \$3, 5½" x 8½", color, 10 pgs.

What happens when you buy GG Allin's preserved dick from a hard-up Merle Allin? Well, this comic suggests it just might start talking, insulting you, and quoting GG's lyrics. Next thing you know, you might be slamming dope with hookers and said micropenis. The illustrator of this comic had to grace GG with an inch or so of length in a couple of panels simply to make it stand up and talk—a dick so small it would, otherwise, stop the flow of the story. That struck me as kind of funny. —Craven Rock (veek13veek@gmail.com, veek.rocks)

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #423, \$4.99, 8½" x 11", newsprint, 104 pgs.

This issue of *Maximum Rock'n'roll* features the Break Free Fest and is promoted as "By Punks of Color for Punks of Color," which is something I can fully get behind. The fest is in its second year and is held in Philadelphia, Pa., and showcased a myriad of bands from all walks of marginalized lives and identities. In a nutshell, it was a celebration of punk bands of color united by music to let loose, have fun, talk shit on our oppressors, and ultimately raise some funds to donate to worthy causes such as the Trans Lifeline, United We Dream, and The People's Paper Co-op. Judging from the cover's photograph, the shows looked like a lot of fun and boasted a largely black audience: fuck yeah! I haven't flipped through an issue of *MRR* in quite some time, but a lot of my old favorites (Al Quint, Felix Von Havoc) are still representing. And while a lot of the other columnists are new to me, their writings are full of perspective from varying degrees, such as sex work (Erin Gerety) and radical teachers in the education field (John No). You say you want fucking punk bands? Featured are Olympia noise fuckers Physique, Portland political punks Abolitionist, and Parisians PMS in a farewell interview of sorts. All this plus the usual record, zine, movie, book, and demo reviews. Even though I'm not as much as a regular reader as I was in my early twenties, I find comfort in knowing that the world's longest running punk fanzine still has something for everyone and doesn't seem to be in danger of disappearing anytime soon. —Juan Espinosa (Maximum Rock'n'roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

MINIMUM ROCK + ROLL #12, \$1, 5½" x 4¼", copied, 6 pgs.
Mini-zine containing one short interview and short reviews of indie bands. This issue features an interview with Boston-based Temporary Eyesore. This stripped down project from Zoe from the band Halfsour is an indie pop gem. The interview talks about the vulnerability of the new project and the sadness in a lot of the songs. The issue also features record reviews of Royal Roads, Babehoven, Resounding No, Hard Pass, Stars Are Insane, and Pre Nup. —Tricia Ramos (Minimum Rock + Roll, no address listed)

MINOR LEAGUES #6, \$?, 9" x 8", copied, 100 pgs.

I was (and am) a huge fan of the previous issue of this one. Editor Simon Moreton has a distinct visual style which lets readers fill in gaps: his drawings imply depth and motion with their thick ink strokes and thin lines. In this issue, the first part of a larger narrative, Simon wonders whether he'll be able to do justice to the story of losing his father to cancer. The answer is a resounding yes: Simon's illustrations are a perfect complement to his prose, which uses breaks in chronology effectively to add even more narrative layers. One of the best zines out there right now. —Michael T. Fournier (smoo.bigcartel.com)

REAL BOSS HOSS #3, \$5, 8½" x 11", 28 pgs.

Keeping well within the parameters of "Chicano Time," Jorge unleashes the third issue of this zine some sixteen years after the second. Not much has changed stylistically—emphasis is largely on the garage end of the punk spectrum, with Courier fonts in abundance and snatches of intelligence-tinged obnoxiousness within its Xeroxed pages. This time 'round we get interviews with Trent from

begin to lose their livelihoods, but by banding together they at the very least feel a little better about it. They heal together from trauma. And all of it, believe me, is magical. The author weaves astrology and spirituality into all of their work in the hopes we'll all be a little better for it. —Jimmy Cooper (astroletariat.com)

TEAR THE PETALS OFF OF YOU, \$?, 4½" x 5½", copied, 54 pgs.

A zine about abuse and the emotional wear and tear it continues to do on one survivor. When a popular band has a member outed as an abuser, a zinester's world is turned upside down as their own personal love and devotion to the band changes in an instant and connects their own trauma directly to their own ex. A cathartic and openly honest zine, the emotion is so visceral one can't help but feel it all deeply. A reminder that trauma not only lives in our memories—it can be brought back from the most unexpected places. —Tricia Ramos (Tear The Petals Off Of You, crapandemic.storenvy.com)

TECHNICAL AUTHORITY, 5½" x 8½", copied, 3 pgs.

A very short zine making the case that authoritarian systems can only make oppressive technology. Or, in his words, "Should we ever be lucky enough to see the toppling of authoritarian society, technology would go with it." He quotes Marshall McLuhan, who says, "Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies." It's the latter in a society where it's used as a means of social control. On that note, my hard drive crashed, making these reviews late, as well as making me unable to buy a plane ticket to go do disaster relief work in North Carolina or get access to writing I wanted to work on. So... case in point. As usual, a pretty decent,

My face has melted to a great degree.
I've felt my body turned to slime, and it
was disgusting and amazing.

—Iggy Nicklbottum | GUNK #1

the Mummies (which is worth the price of admission alone) and comedian April Richardson, plus a "diary" of the 2017 installment of the Ponderosa Stomp, a tribute to George A. Romero, a "Guide to African Rock 'n' Roll," comics, and assorted reviews. It remains one of my fave local zines, and here's hoping Jorge can get the next installment out before we're both in an old folks home. —Jimmy Alvarado (Real Boss Hoss, PO Box 50236, LA, CA 90050)

SHORT, FAST & LOUD #30, \$10, 7" x 7", copied, 54 pgs.

Athena Kautsch and Jeff Robinson have published *Short, Fast & Loud* since the late '90s. Their dedication to all forms of ear-piercing music is honestly admirable. The latest issue boasts interviews with recently reformed SoCal powerviolence band Gasp, Italian hardcore legends Cheeah Chrome Motherfuckers, and Brazilian noise outfit Industrial Holocaust. Also included are record reviews and columns, including some background on Kautsch and Melissa Elbirt's upcoming documentary *The West Coast Power Violence Project*. *Short, Fast & Loud* is lovingly assembled for all you deviant noise junkies out there! The additional Violation Wound and Deathgrave split 7" is the cherry on top. —Sean Arenas (Short, Fast & Loud!, sixweeksrecords@comcast.net)

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING #76, two stamps, 5½" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.

This is the thirtieth anniversary issue of *Something for Nothing*, and in it we get columns from long-running contributors updating us on what they've been up to since last writing. Each copy of this anniversary issue also features one-of-a-kind hand-colored covers (with crayons). Reviews included feature new Dead Milkmen releases, Citizen Fish, Violent Femmes, and my personal favorite, the beverage review column. I don't know why non-alcoholic beverage reviews are so appealing to me, but I always look forward to them with *Something for Nothing* issues. —Tricia Ramos (Something For Nothing, PO Box 226, Massillon, OH 44648)

SPIDER SPELLBOOK FOR RABBIT'S HOME, A,

\$10, 5½" x 8½", color, copied, 26 pgs.

There's a special place in this world for those who write children's stories, and a special place in that special place for those who write children's stories about magic, healing, and the power of communist friendship. Here's the thing about children's stories: they're almost never just for children. This story resonates with all ages because the problems resonate with all ages. A group of friends

thoughtful, and brief essay by Jason Rodgers. —Craven Rock (Campaign to Play for Keeps, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201)

YAAWN COMIC #2, \$5, 5½" x 8½", copied, 12 pgs.

YAAWN is a band. YAAWN is also a comic zine about the band. All I know is this comic is two stories on the adventures of the band. Damn, man. I need all bands to make zine-comics about their adventures on the road, because it has the power to connect them with their audience. Shit, I'm listening to their fucking Bandcamp as I write this, so it's already a good marketing tool. The first story is super short and gets its point across, but the second story is the best. The punch line at the end about "not being ska enough" is my favorite part of the whole thing. It's funny, and the drawings are like a sloppy Adventure Time, if it had a bunch of tired punks. Check it out. —Iggy Nicklbottum (YAAWN, artsnocrassdistro.com)

ZISK #29, \$3, 7" x 11", copied, 36 pgs.

Given that it covers a game which manifests change at a pace somewhere between somnambulant and glacial, the self-proclaimed "Baseball Magazine for People Who Hate Baseball Magazines" enters its twentieth season looking little different than it did in 1999. Size, shape, page count, office copier aesthetic—it's all practically the same as it was nineteen years ago. What is far less predictable about *Zisk* is the content in any given issue: Other than having a starting point of "having something to do with baseball," there is virtually no telling what any given issue might contain. If you're imagining a run of who-can-yell-the-loudest diatribes about whether the Dodgers should have started Clayton Kershaw in Game 1 of the NLDS, you're imagining incorrectly. Topics covered in the current issue, for example, include the music in baseball stadiums, Houston's post-flood World Series celebration, my investigative report into why the 1965 Fritz Ackley baseball card is worth two hundred bucks if the guy only won one game in his career, Todd Taylor's typically meticulous history of the Houston Astrodome and the turf therein—which then spins off into a separate four-page rant about the history of grass (I'm not kidding)—poetry, and more. I might be biased, but it's fascinating to observe what a dozen different contributors come up with when they're asked, broadly, to "write something about baseball." As a result, *Zisk* can be read and enjoyed by just about anyone who doesn't manifest a legitimate hatred of the sport, and, like baseball itself, you can jump in anytime without feeling that missing the last twenty years has left you insurmountably disadvantaged. —Rev. Norb (PO Box 469, Patterson NY 12563, ziskmagazine@aol.com)



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-Cyttorak "4 Song Demo" cassette

FFO: Primitive Man/Neurosis

-Heavy Mantle "Weights & Measures" LP

FFO: Small Brown Bike/Cursive

-Leopard Print Taser "Teeth Are Not Bones" 7"

FFO: Bikini Kill/The Wipers/Polvo

-Sullest "Fashionable Male" cassette

FFO: Torche/Floor/Helms Alee

-Aneurysm "Awareness" LP

FFO: dirty rock & roll

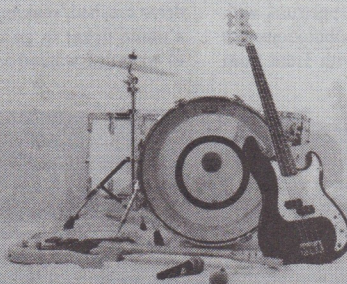


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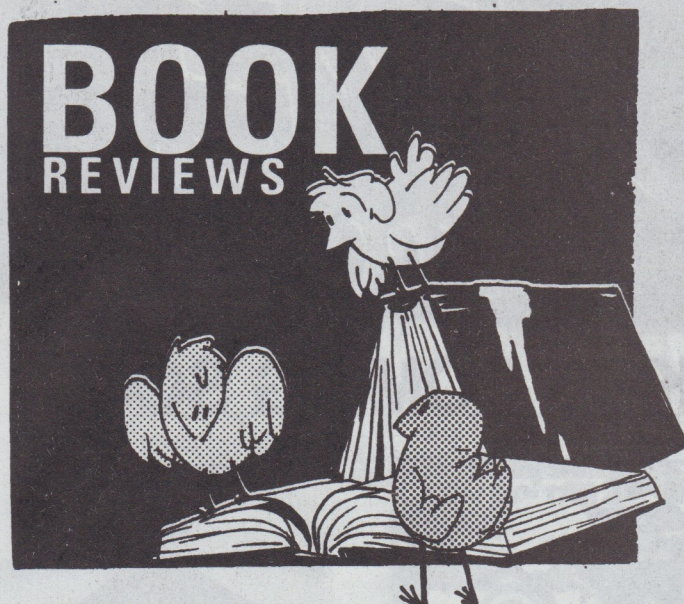
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Beautiful Music

By Michael Zadoorian, 335 pgs.

To write about music is not necessarily a brave choice. You tend to love music so much you can't help it. Hopefully, you're not an insincere writer, picking subject matter with a guaranteed audience. I devoured Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*—its non-stop musical referencing made for an easy, fun novel, but in the end it left me with a weird sense of shame at being so easily manipulated by pop culture references I related to. I feared the same would happen when I

this wasn't really about music at all" feeling that I demand of music writing. But then I had to admit that it really was about rock, its power to heal and transcend. Zadoorian had an easy book to write. His refusal to write it the easy way makes all the difference. —Craven Rock (Soft Skull Press, softskull.com)

Constitution Demands It, The:

The Case for the Impeachment of Donald Trump

By Ron Fein, John Bonifaz, Ben Clements, 224 pgs.

It is a testament to Donald Trump's shittiness that this very thorough book, which was printed in August 2018, is already dated and in need of an expanded edition as of the beginning of October 2018. This book is informative because it is not written in a polemical style trying to convince people Trump is a bigoted, corrupt, ignorant, distempered, reckless, thin-skinned, narcissistic demagogue with anti-democratic tendencies. Rather, starting with the premise that the aforementioned characteristics of Trump's presidency are already readily apparent with even minimal research, the strength of this book is that it is instead written in the style of an extended, rather dry legal argument which enumerates what exactly the potential legal groundwork would be were Trump to actually be held to account by Congress and impeached.

While the book is dry, it is not boring. Rather, the three attorneys who penned this book do an excellent job of articulating the many ways Trump and his administration's flagrant disregard for the constitutional duties and standards of his office evince more than sufficient cause, according to precedent and the Constitution, to set in motion impeachment proceedings were there is the political will to do so. Eight areas are considered and fleshed out in briefings, which lay out the facts and legal reasoning for each's potential as an article of impeachment. The book is written in a very accessible layperson's legalese which does a great job of being eminently readable while avoiding condescension. The book reads like a depressing greatest hits of why Trump's administration is one of the United States' low points, but the clarity with which the authors explore each of these areas (including such things as Trump's refusal to sever his compromising business interests, his constant attacks on the press, and his malicious abuse

The book reads like a depressing greatest hits of why Trump's administration is one of the United States' low points, but the clarity helps focus the sense of anger when one thinks of the presidency in its current state.

—Adrian Salas | *The Constitution Demands It*

picked up *Beautiful Music*. I felt compelled to read it, but my dignity couldn't bear another pandering rock novel catering to my rock obsessions.

Beautiful Music was far from such trivialities, transcending all that trendy mixtape-in-the-title horseshit. Michael Zadoorian is able to do this, partly, because of his deft characterization of Danny, an awkward, chubby teenager. He's bullied in high school and has few friends. What he does have is rock'n'roll, but not right away; his voice is one of naivety and he's able to tell you what he doesn't know. He doesn't know much about music, but he knows when his dad listens to the "Beautiful Music" station that plays elevator music versions of pop songs, he'd rather hear the original. When the bad boy at school fools the teacher into playing MC5's "Kick out the Jams," he's drawn to it, but he's not sure why. Something about it haunts him.

Danny is a late bloomer. He'd rather build model cars than learn to drive one. His father understands this and makes Danny take driving lessons. Danny enjoys them. His relationship with his father is warm. However, with his death, Danny's forced to face what his father had largely taken the brunt of in his mother's mental illness and alcoholism. Danny deals with these hardships by losing himself in rock riffs of The Stooges, Led Zeppelin, and Alice Cooper. You're right there with him when he learns the power of rock. Zadoorian is able use this to expertly set Danny in his time and place—Detroit in the early seventies—in a believable way. It was a time when Detroit had moved through a rich musical era of Motown, rock, and funk, but it was far from over and just beginning for Danny. It was also a tumultuous time in Michigan. The book, set not long after the Detroit Rebellion—the riot of '67 when black people fought police oppression in the streets—is simmering and tense.

I read *Beautiful Music* compulsively until its end, captivated by the sympathetic character of Danny. I was left with the satisfying, "Wait a minute,

of presidential pardons) helps focus the sense of anger that arises when one thinks of the presidency in its current state.

The attorneys who wrote this book work for an organization called Free Speech for People, and have impressive backgrounds including law school at Stanford, Cornell, and Harvard. With the current Republican control of both chambers of Congress, and now cementing their dominance over the Supreme Court by fecklessly pushing through walking shit-stain Brett Kavanaugh to the bench, even a book this well formulated and researched is essentially just wishful thinking unless major changes happen come November. Just in the last week the *New York Times* published a gigantic investigative report on how Donald Trump and his family have potentially committed hundreds of millions of dollars of fraud in cementing their fortune, and already it's being forgotten due to how much figurative garbage Trump and his right wing enablers in the White House and Congress keep shoveling onto the country. Here's hoping against hope that change happens this November.

—Adrian Salas (Melville House Publishing, mhpbooks.com)

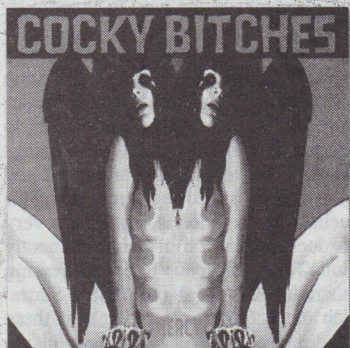
I Brought Down the MC5

By Michael Davis, 345 pgs.

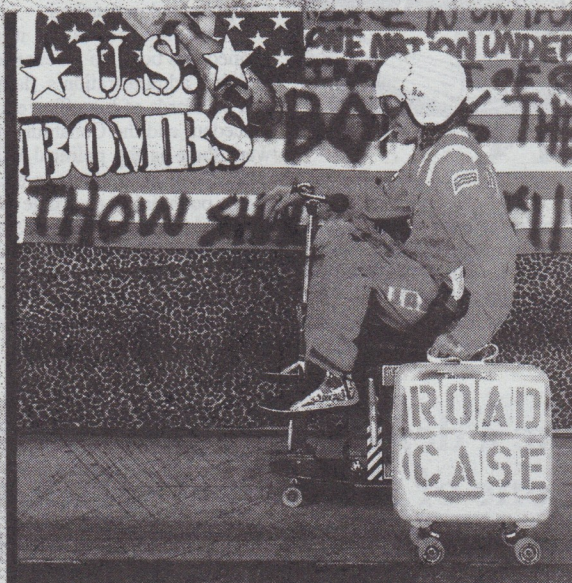
This was a bit of a shocker to see this pop up in 2018, considering I knew the author had passed away in 2012. Whatever the back story is, let's be glad this is here. The book traces Michael Davis's history growing up in 1960s Detroit. Michael later became caught up in rock music, going from just attending shows to getting up on stage. Although he would become best known for being the MC5's bassist, we now have the background of how he got there. Post-MC5 there were various projects, the most notable being his stint with Ron Asheton in Destroy All Monsters. Davis is brutally honest

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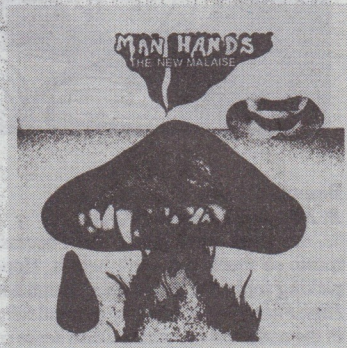
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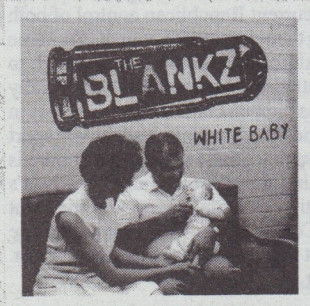
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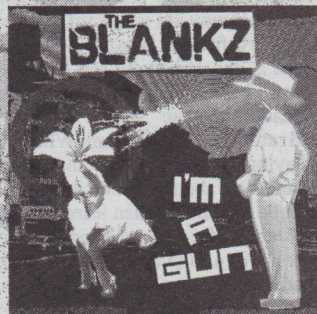
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in how a lot of his life decisions were fueled by drugs and alcohol. In later years, he became more involved with painting. Life seemed to settle down a bit for him in later years, with his last marriage most likely assisting with that situation. What's more intriguing are some of the stories not told, the major one being his reunion with Wayne Kramer and Dennis Thompson in 2003 for a tour. Was this redeeming for him after being kicked out of the band originally? I guess we will never know. This is still a fascinating story I highly recommend any fans of the band check out. —Sean Koepenick (Cleopatrazine, cleopatrazine.com)

Inhabit: Instructions for Autonomy, 75 pgs.

Inhabit: Instructions for Autonomy started out as a zine, later republished as this cute little volume. The zine version is fantastic; however, this edition is both updated and visually cooler. There's nothin' wrong with the black-and-white photocopied zine aesthetic, but in book form it's slicker and printed in orange and green monochrome images and text. It just looks really rad, okay?

That being said, the associated website is, in the most eloquent of terms, really fucking cool, and in fact, a visit to inhabit.global takes you straight

to the elimination of panels altogether. Take her comic from October 24 as an example: set up as an equation on the page, she and her husband Kyle, dressed in autumn clothes, are paired with a plus sign. The couple is paired with a rake, shovel, and dustpan. To the right of an equal sign are fifteen bags of leaves. The cartoon of an entire day spent in the yard of their new house, ridding their lawn of seasonal detritus demonstrates how much work the day took not as a task, but as a math problem (emphasis on the last word): There's no border to their equation, just the yawn of repetition for each of the fifteen bags, the repetitious cycle of bending over to stuff leaves into bags. Contrast this pull pager to that of October 17, wherein Prince lies on the bottom of the page, surrounded by a border, looking funereal as the weight of her depression literally holds her down in the coffin of a panel: with so many words comprising her self-reflection, there's nowhere for her to go, and no way to get up. Both days are different—but dazzling.

The heavier entries contrast with both the more everyday topics—like hanging with her cats, going out to eat, shopping for seltzer—and the hilarious (I'll never hear Hall And Oates the same way again) and momentous (buying a house, or, for all the wrong reasons, the 2016 election). A year encompasses a spectrum of emotions, obviously, and in less expert hands

So, yeah. It's idealistic but I needed it, and I think a lot of us do. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the good that's out there, the fight that's always taking place, and our part in it.

—Jimmy Cooper | *Inhabit: Instructions for Autonomy*

to the digital version of the text, which is not, as many digital texts are, a shitty, grainy PDF with no attention to the fact that people are actually going to read this, but an interactive iteration of the text. It also carries the same visuals as the book and comes in Spanish and French!

Inhabit themselves are an anonymous network of all types of radicals involved in all types of projects across the country; their main goal is providing tools for autonomous living within, though eventually without, the structures already in place. *Instructions for Autonomy*, then, is exactly what it sounds like: a call to action, an idealistic manifesto, and, well, instructions for autonomy. What I like about the book, though, is that, unlike many tonally similar radical texts, it provides real, concrete starting places for personal revolutions. So you can't kill every racist cop in your hometown, that's okay. Start by creating a "hub," to use their word, of people who support each other, and resolve disputes internally. Take care of each other. So we can't tear the healthcare system apart insurance office by insurance office, well, educate yourselves and each other about our bodies and how to take care of them.

So, yeah. It's idealistic but I needed it, and I think a lot of us do. Sometimes we need to be reminded of the good that's out there, the fight that's always taking place, and our part in it. I loved *Instructions for Autonomy*, because amidst all the fucked-up stuff that's happening, it reminded me there's a lot more that I can do besides sit at home and occasionally wear a lot of black and attend a protest. I can exist, at least in part, in ways that are directly antithetical to the system at large, and it's a better life. —Jimmy Cooper (inhabit.global, for distribution, hello@inhabit.global)

Look Back and Laugh: Journal Comics

By Liz Prince, 416 pgs.

Maybe you're like me and became familiar with Liz Prince's comics through *Razorcake*. She always did a great job of weaving stuff from the punk scene into her short comics here. Her graphic novel *Tomboy* is fantastic, too—she writes and draws honestly about growing up battling pressures to conform to gender norms, and the longer format of the graphic novel allows her narrative writing to shine.

I was interested to see how her skill with both short and long form stuff would come together in *Look Back and Laugh*, a collection of her diary comics originally offered as incentives to her Patreon subscribers. The answer, I'm happy to report, is Liz Prince is *killing* it here.

Throughout *Look Back and Laugh*, Prince has an uncanny knack for style and pacing. She's aware of how accelerating or decelerating action can occur through the number and style of her panels—or sometimes through

would not have come across with such a level of pathos and daring. But Liz Prince is unafraid to take risks, to put her life on display in creative and brave depictions, making her art and storytelling some of the most compelling reading of recent memory. —Michael T. Fournier (Top Shelf Productions, topshelfcomix.com)

MDC Al Schvitz: Double Life in Double Time

By Alan "Al Schvitz" Schultz, 190 pgs.

MDC is one of those bands I've always registered as a low-level hum in the background: I'm *aware* of them, but haven't spent much time with their catalogue. I remember that I saw them play the Elvis Room in New Hampshire back in the '90s, but mostly because friends were psyched they got to open for a national touring band. I have one of their records which I bought for a buck at a punk flea market, but have never listened to. That's it.

I preface this review with my ignorance of the band and their catalogue because, often, books like this require some sort of awareness of the group/musician in question. Not this one, though. Foreknowledge is not a requirement for reading *Double Life in Double Time*, which held me rapt from start to finish.

Author Alan Schultz—"Al Schvitz" while playing drums for MDC—spent time in San Quentin on drug charges. His prison narrative is grounded in the present of 1995, where he kills time by writing a band memoir. He discusses his band the Stains morphing into MDC, and relocating from Texas to San Francisco. As he recalls his past, his anecdotes dredge up recollections of prison, or out-of-the-ordinary events behind bars—interrupting the narrative.

The book, whether discussing time in a cell or in the van, is comprised of motion and tedium. Being on tour is great, certainly, but not when the hands on the clock won't move during a day-long drive, and especially when that drive is rendered moot by a show cancellation—not entirely unlike watching and waiting for a chance to exercise in the yard, which is then cancelled. In addition to the tedium of repetition (and vice versa), Schultz describes being in motion throughout both narrative threads. He's moved from cell to cell, facility to facility, even as he describes being brought across the Atlantic to tour with Dead Kennedys, or one of the band's umpteenth U.S. tours, playing Rock Against Reagan shows and beyond.

Schultz's wry tone is an odd pleasure in the context of prison memoirs. I went back and re-read passages from some, particularly *In the Belly of the Beast*, as comparison. None of the sharp brutality of the other volumes is present here. Whether discussing using prison envelopes as currency or booking punk tours on payphones with a dialer, Schultz is an affable narrator,

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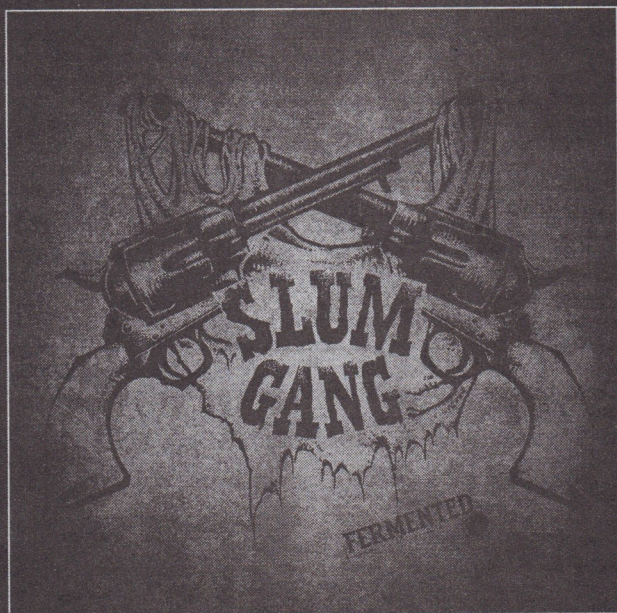
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addressing the reader directly throughout like a correspondent delivering an extensive epistle.

I had a blast reading this one; MDC's marathon laps through the punk world make for no shortage of anecdotes, connections, and namedrops. But Schultz's recollections of time in prison are equally engaging, and cleverly connect, reinforce, and shade throughout. Recommended. —Michael T. Fournier (Manic D Press, manicdpress.com)

Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl

By Andrea Lawlor, 354 pgs.

The very first thing I have to say is that *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* is, very, very simple: this is one of the best books I've read in the last year for sure, and probably ever. This book absolutely slapped. It was slow and meandering, and the plot wasn't really... a plot, per se, but goddamn.

The novel takes place in several sects of the '90s alternative scene, including riot grrrl punk, gay cruising and clubbing, and punk. Its narrator and main creature feature, Paul, is a Midwestern shapeshifter hell-bent on love and lust. Though the premise seems like a venture into thinly veiled pornography, *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* is a foray into the very

Yet there is another relationship that carries on throughout these pages. It is the relationship we have with our environment: the sky, the grass, the air, and everything that surrounds us, especially for those living in rural settings. These relationships—interpersonal and environmental—form the foundation of the one question that is overarching in *The Silence Is the Noise*: how do we connect back to those places we once called our home? How do we handle the memories and feelings we have of a place versus who we have become in the years since we left that place?

It is in that dichotomy that Schaneman weaves his tale and takes us along for the ride. He does so in a story that cuts out the fat and moves along quickly (something I always appreciate). I've been to similar wide open places Schaneman describes in this book. Places where the openness of the environment affects your emotions and the sky just seems to roll on forever. While I don't know if I would ever want to live in such a place, Schaneman makes me want to see that environment and meet the characters in *The Silence Is the Noise*. And the ability to want to live inside the setting of a book is one of the most powerful things a writer can accomplish. —Kurt Morris (Trident Press, 940 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302)

If your idea of “punk won” is counting money rather than ways in which punk rock empowered marginalized people, created community, and fomented social change, then by all means, dig in. Otherwise, I read this so you don't have to.

Michael T. Fournier | *Smash! Green Day, The Offspring, Bad Religion, NOFX and the 90s Punk Explosion*

nature of gender and sexuality. Paul himself doesn't know where he really lies in gender, even though any body he could possibly want is a body he could have. His nature is completely malleable. He lives much of his public life as a young gay man of the type folks would call a twink now, but only because he can't tell anyone about his ability. When he has the opportunity to be anonymous, he often does so as a woman, a much more butch man that he fronts as, or any number of other personalities.

Everyone's gender is fluid. I should say, rather, that everyone's gender presentation is fluid. A young boy might act more traditionally masculine around his friends as a front, or a teenage girl might put on a dress she normally wouldn't even consider wearing to impress a teenage boy on a date. Others change their gender presentation on the daily simply through dress and attitude, and sometimes it's more subtle than that, a look here, a few words there. All gender serves, at the end of the day, is as a series of “tells” that send signals to other people about the gender of the sender, and Paul is a hyperbolized representation of that. Paul tells the reader that it's okay to be confused, to be ever-changing, to contain multitudes, and of course, to enjoy it, to enjoy life in all of your and its form. And yeah, *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* gets steamy. Enjoy that, too. —Jimmy Cooper (rescuepress.co)

Silence Is the Noise, The

By Bart Schaneman, 154 pgs.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of reading Bart Schaneman's essays and books. His ability to capture a geographic place and bring it alive has always struck me as the most powerful aspects of his writing. In his latest fiction work, *The Silence Is the Noise*, Schaneman once again brings to life the characters' surroundings, this time in western Nebraska. Given that Schaneman is from this area and worked at the newspaper in Scottsbluff, I'm sure that much of this story of a cub reporter for a small town Nebraska newspaper is based on his personal experiences.

The reporter, Ethan Thomas, gets a big story when an oil company starts pumping fracking water into the ground nearby, causing earthquakes. Thomas has just returned to his hometown after living in various cities and tries to figure out his place in life. He stumbles through understanding how to handle a big story, being back in his old hometown, and in a relationship with someone who desperately wants to leave Nebraska.

It is in the relationship between one person to another as well as one person to their environment that the book finds its strength. The connection between Thomas and his editor, who guides him as he starts his journalism career, is heartening. This relationship, as well as the one between Ethan Thomas and his lover, Lucy, drives much of the story.

Smash! Green Day, The Offspring, Bad Religion, NOFX and the 90s Punk Explosion

By Ian Winwood, 290 pg.

If you have even a passing interest in pop punk, you probably know at least a little about the sad demise of Lookout! Records a few years back.

Remember what a big story it was?

Lookout! made wheelbarrows full of money on Green Day's back catalogue after the band jumped to a major label with *Dookie*. Label honcho Larry Livermore was overwhelmed after a time: the imprint he had started as a tiny operation in a bedroom and had morphed from a labor of love into a full-fledged business. It wasn't fun for him anymore. So Larry handed the reins over to his partners, who mismanaged the label's coffers to such an extent Lookout! couldn't pay royalties to its bands. The whole operation folded when Green Day came to collect.

In *Smash! Green Day, The Offspring, Bad Religion, NOFX and the 90s Punk Explosion*, author Ian Winwood says that since departing for the majors Green Day “have honored (their) contract (with Larry) and have made no efforts to reclaim the music released on Lookout! Records.”

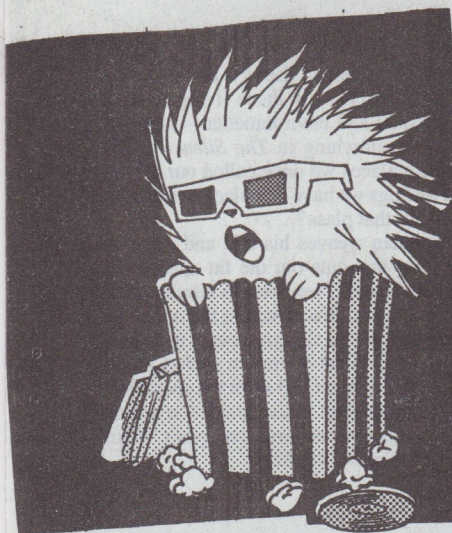
This is the exact opposite of what really happened.

I was already deeply skeptical of *Smash!* by the time I got to the above passage. It's funny, because in the credits Winwood cites none other than Larry Livermore as a key source. Indeed, there was a whiff of familiarity to a lot of the Green Day stuff herein because I've read both of Larry's books—including *How To Ru(i)n A Record Label*, which discusses Lookout! having trouble paying bands. This book is about capitalism in punk—how, in the wake of the titular bands' records sales “anyone forming a punk band did so with the knowledge that in doing so it was possible to become wealthy.” But there's a cost largely unexplored here. Lookout! threw money around like a major label and paid the consequences—none of which the author mentions, or, if we're to believe him, *even knows about*.

Some of *Smash!* is unintentional comedy, like when Winwood, with no trace of irony, says “if any band in (his) book has been short-changed of the respect owed to them, it is the Offspring.” He earnestly discusses their chances of entering the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, then, some chapters later, actively argues that “Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)” is *not* a novelty song.

If your idea of “punk won” is counting money rather than ways in which punk rock empowered marginalized people, created community, and fomented social change, then by all means, dig in. Otherwise, I read this so you don't have to. —Michael T. Fournier (Da Capo, dacapopress.com)





A helluva testament to the lasting effects of what people can do on their own without corporations, Svengalis, money-grubbing parasites, and all the bad, boring shit they drag along in their wake.

—Jimmy Alvarado

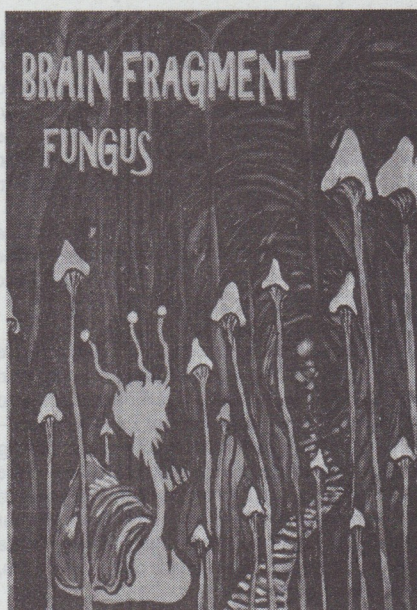
VIDEO review

Turn It Around: The Story of East Bay Punk: DVD

Doing any sort of "[hi]story of..." type deal—book, film, panel, whatever—is destined to attract detractors, often based just as much on who/what was *not* included as on who/what was included. *Turn It Around* has its share of omissions, some rather glaring (one of Berkeley's key first-wave hardcore bands and arguably the most influential of U.S. anarcho-punk bands, Crucifix, is diminished to a passing mention), some more understandable (Rabid Lassie, Sewer Trout). It'd be easy as pie, especially so for scene locals, to bicker and nitpick *Turn It Around* and totally miss the forest for the trees—a reverential film about one of the country's more influential venues, 924 Gilman Street, the community that built up around it and flourishes within its walls, and the bands that have called it home.

True, the early history of punk in the East Bay is kinda blown through relatively quick-like: The Free Speech Movement and

hippies give way to the first smatterings of punk in the shadow of San Francisco's larger scene housed at the Mabuhay Gardens. That in turn spawns the *Maximumrocknroll* multimedia juggernaut, serving as the back story leading to the establishment of Gilman. That aside, what's left is a very well made, good-looking film (thanks to Green Day and its former manager, who serve as executive producers) lovingly crafted with the direct input of many who were/are directly involved in that scene. A two-and-a-half-hour run time sounds daunting, but pacing is such that one hardly feels it. Director Corbett Redford successfully juggles many narrative pins in the air at the same time—varying and sometimes clashing politics/viewpoints that occur between individuals, subgenres and generations; differing ways of dealing with outside pressures; the inevitable sniffing around by the music industry in the wake of "Gilman bands" Rancid and Green Day's success; and the flawed, very human folks who brought it all into existence. It's done in a way that accentuates the positive while maintaining a level of honesty, revealing that even the best utopic intentions of, say, a DIY punk venue has its share of challenges and missteps. Exhaustive dumpster-dive into thee history of a scene? Nope, but it is a helluva testament to the lasting effects of what people can do on their own without corporations, Svengalis, money-grubbing parasites, and all the bad, boring shit they drag along in their wake. —Jimmy Alvarado (1-2-3-4-GO!, 1234gorerecords.com)



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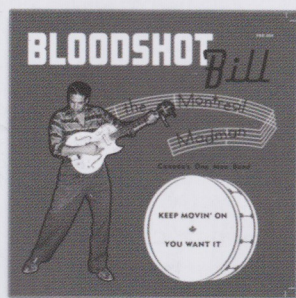
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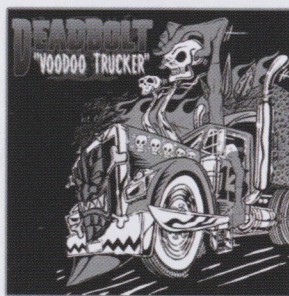
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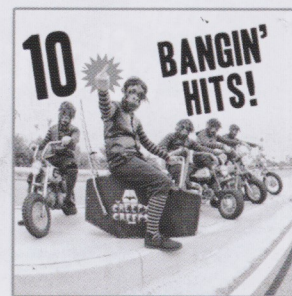
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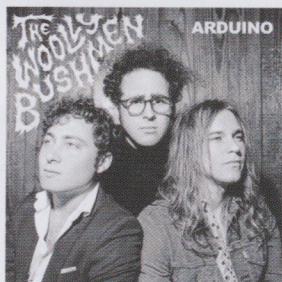
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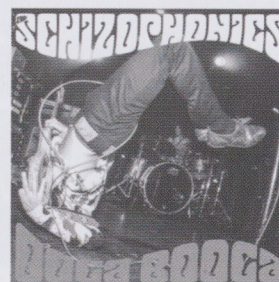
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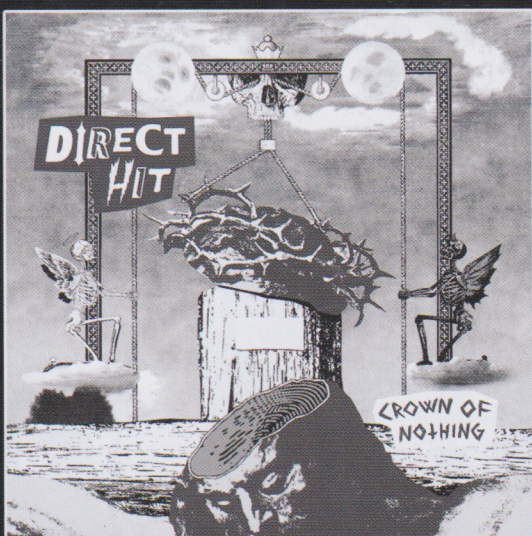
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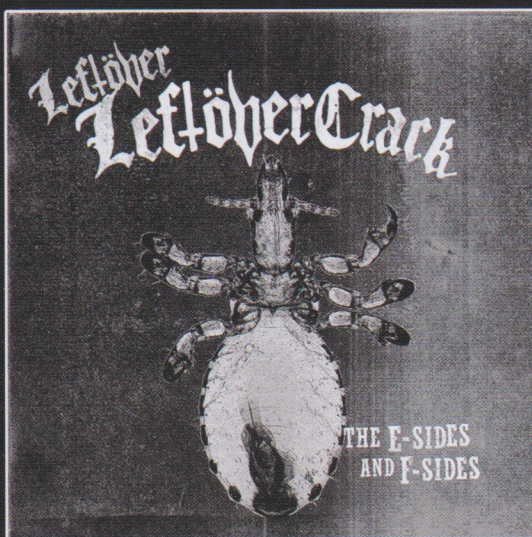




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Despise You



ANTHONY MEHLHAFF

During the early '90s Despise You were a band whose members identities were shrouded in a thick haze of rumors and secrecy. Outlaws using a band as a cover? Powerviolence supergroup? The cat was out of the bag years later when the internet forever destroyed

wanting: the live madness that is DY. The band marked their first show at Murderfest in 2007 and have gone on with countless more, along with a string of new recordings (the first being some demos later re-recorded for a split with Agoraphobic Nosebleed in 2011). The band has since settled

playoff game going on freeway exits away) to Phil and Cynthia at R. The conversation was v beginning with their one another, motivation playing/writing, and p and bathrooms around